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ABSTRACT

This proceedings compiles papers presented at a symposium convened to honor the contributions that Professor Lilian Katz has made to the field of Early Childhood Education. The introduction to the proceedings provides a brief biography of Dr. Katz, an overview of her contributions in the areas of curriculum, teacher education, and information dissemination, and discussion of the framework in which the papers were presented. The more than 40 papers, given by colleagues and former students from around the world, are then presented, organized into the following sections: (1) "Celebrating the Project Approach"; (2) "Designing Curriculum for the Early Years"; (3) "Preparing Teachers to Work with Diverse Populations"; (4) "Preparing Teachers for the Changing Early Childhood Classroom"; (5) "International Perspectives on Early Childhood Education: Barbados and Mexico"; (6) "Enjoying the Diversity of All Classrooms"; (7) "The Project Approach Revisited"; (8) "School Change"; (9) "Dispositions as Goals in Early Childhood Education"; (10) "Preparing Teachers for the Project Approach"; (11) "On Communication and Dissemination"; and (12) "Looking Back--and Looking Ahead." In addition, papers from 4 roundtable sessions are included. The proceedings concludes with contributors' biographies and a select bibliography of works by Dr. Katz. (HTH)

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Proceedings of the
Lilian Katz Symposium
November 5-7, 2000

ISSUES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

curriculum, teacher education, & dissemination of information

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2002

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Edited by Dianne Rothenberg

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Introduction

Dianne Rothenberg

Abstract

This introduction to the proceedings of a symposium honoring Lilian Katz provides a brief biography of Dr. Katz, an overview of her contribution to the field of early childhood education, and a discussion of the papers presented at the symposium.

Lilian G. Katz taught at the University of Illinois for more than three decades—from 1968 until the year 2000. To celebrate all that she contributed to those who work with children during those 32 years, we decided to organize a symposium and, in the time-honored scholarly tradition, to produce a small volume to mark the event. After deciding on three major areas of Lilian's contributions to early childhood education—curriculum, teacher education, and the dissemination of information—we sent out a call for papers, anticipating the selection of 12 to 15 speakers and a small gathering of colleagues and friends.

The response of colleagues around the world and students past and present changed our plans. We were faced with an overwhelming number of people who wanted to honor Lilian and celebrate her years of teaching and lecturing. We knew that Lilian would not want to exclude anyone, and so we expanded the symposium to include the many people who wanted to be part of the celebration.

These proceedings cannot capture everything that took place during the symposium, but the papers do provide some insights into Lilian's profound influence on the field of early childhood education. In this set of papers presented at the symposium honoring Lilian Katz, *Issues in Early Childhood Education: Curriculum, Teacher Education, and Dissemination of Information* (November 5-7, 2000, Champaign, Illinois), we are pleased to present essays, reports of research, opinion papers, and project descriptions that reflect her scholarly interests.

This introduction is divided into three parts. In the first section, we provide a brief biography of Lilian Katz. The second section provides an overview of her contributions to the field of early childhood education. The third section discusses the framework for the papers presented at the symposium.

A Brief Biography of Lilian Katz

It seems fitting, before presenting the papers in this publication, to include some biographical information about the individual being honored. Lilian Gonshaw Katz was born to Joseph and Eva Gonshaw in London, England, in 1932. Lilian and her twin sister Anita also had an older sister, Ellen. The families of both parents had fled from Eastern Europe—her father's family from Poland at the end of the 19th century, and her mother's family at the beginning of the 20th century, to escape persecution of Jews. Joseph, the youngest of many siblings, was born and grew up in England. Her mother's family fled from Russia to Paris, where Eva grew up. As a young woman, Eva met Joseph on a visit to relatives in England and later married him.

As was true of all families in England, the Gonshaws were profoundly affected by the Second World War. Three days before war was declared in 1939, the twins and older sister Ellen were evacuated to the countryside—to different villages—in anticipation of the bombing of London. Lilian and her twin were sent to the tiny hamlet of Beachingstoke, Wiltshire, in the Salisbury Plain, where they spent two-and-a-half years at a formative time in their lives. "We were treated with healthy neglect during those years," says Lilian. "All that was expected of us was to say our prayers, eat what we were given, and move our bowels!" The woman who took care of Lilian and Anita died very suddenly in March of 1942. By that time the Blitz was over, so their mother brought them back to London. Within a short time, however, London was attacked by V1 and V2 rockets, called "pilotless planes." The whole family moved north to Manchester and stayed there for about three months, until the danger had passed.

Joseph Gonshaw was a tailor. He would have preferred more interesting work, but family circumstances and social conditions in his youth made alternative choices impossible. One of his deep lifelong interests was music. As young children in a musical family, Lilian and Anita learned to play the violin and piano. The twins won scholarships to the Trinity College of Music in 1943, where they took lessons in a variety of musical subjects every Saturday for five years. Each scholarship was accompanied by a "free place" at a nearby grammar school, the Burlington School for Girls (founded 1699), where they began their formal education.

At the end of the war, older sister Ellen married an American soldier. She joined him in the United States after the war as a "G.I. Bride." Soon after settling with her husband in New York, she began encouraging the rest of the family to come across the ocean. Eva, who had family in Chicago and California, was in favor of the move.

And so the family emigrated to the United States in 1947, settling in California after several months in New York and a short stop in Chicago. Lilian's father found work as a tailor doing "piecework." Lilian attended Woodrow Wilson High School in Los Angeles, while her twin went to a different high school where she could continue her education as an artist. Lilian enjoyed her time at Wilson High. The high school, located in East Los Angeles, was culturally diverse even in the late 1940s, including Hispanic and Mexican children, whose parents worked in the nearby orange groves, and children from the Jewish ghetto in Los Angeles. It was a lively community in the late 1940s, characterized by much optimism about the future.

Then, very suddenly, her father died at just 50 years of age. Lilian was not quite 18 and getting ready to graduate from high school. She was voted one of two girls "most likely to succeed" by her graduating class of 1950. During her last two years of high school, she and her twin worked after school as bookbinders for about 30 cents an hour. Times were difficult for the family, and Eva's extended family helped the Gonshaws.

Looking back over the tumultuous early life of Lilian Katz, it is not difficult to identify some life-shaping events. The trauma of separation from her family, becoming an immigrant to this country after wartime with all its hardships, and her father's early death are perhaps the most obvious life-shaping events in her childhood.

Yet another of these events occurred during Lilian's senior year in high school. One of her teachers sent two essays that Lilian had written to someone she knew and believed could help her. This person sent the essays on to his sister-in-law, Susan Harrison Johnson, an Indiana Quaker who had been a member of the first graduating class from Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania. Mrs. Johnson was one of the founders of Whittier Academy (later Whittier College) in Whittier, California, where she taught Latin and Greek for many years. (She was also a great baseball fan.)

Susan Harrison Johnson asked to meet Lilian. She never asked about Lilian's background or her religion. She simply said to her, "If thee is admitted to Whittier, I will pay for thy tuition." She made sure that Lilian knew the best professors and enrolled in the best classes. She invited Lilian to live with her in return for some minor household duties. Mrs. Johnson was 88 years old when Lilian met her. Following her death a few months later, Lilian learned that Mrs. Johnson had helped pay college expenses for more than 50 talented young women over her many years in the Whittier community. Lilian learned a great deal from this remarkable woman. "What you are speaks more loudly than what you say" is one of the many lessons she absorbed from her time among the Friends (Quakers). Many of the ideas in the "Last Class Notes" in this publication reflect what she learned from them.

Lilian stayed at Whittier for two years. During this time, she studied international politics and French and German. After her sophomore year, a friend invited Lilian to her home in the San Francisco bay area for the summer. There she met Boris Katz at a dance at the San Francisco International House. Boris was also an immigrant to the United States. He had fled Russia with his family as a boy of 8 years old. They journeyed by railroad to Shanghai, China, in 1931, where his father worked making ties for many years to support his family. The Katz family was unable to leave Shanghai for 16 years, while Shanghai was occupied by Japan. By 1947, however, it was clear that his family had to leave. Boris came to the United States on a student visa and attended college at the University of California at Berkeley where he studied civil engineering; his father and aunt followed him to the United States (his mother had passed away while the family lived in Shanghai).

Lilian felt that she and Boris had much in common, even though they had arrived in San Francisco by very different routes. Although she was engaged to someone else at the time (a Viennese exchange student), within three months, Lilian and Boris had married. She continued with her college studies at San Francisco State College without completing a degree until her first child Daniel was born in September of 1954. Surely her marriage and starting a family was another life-shaping event! Stephen and Miriam joined the family in 1956 and 1957. Memories of having three preschoolers at one time helped Lilian appreciate the common predicaments parents face.

When Dan reached preschool age, Lilian enrolled him in a cooperative nursery school at Visitation Valley Cooperative Nursery School in San Francisco. Following the family's move from the city to the peninsula, she continued her participation in parent cooperative nursery schools during Steve and Miriam's nursery school years. Later, she served as president of the Parent-Child Study Center, the parent-cooperative that Steve attended. Finally, she founded the Carlmont Parents Nursery School in San Carlos close to their home, where Miriam spent her nursery school years. Lilian worked one morning each week at the co-op and continued until Miriam, her youngest child, entered kindergarten. Her work at these co-ops sparked her interest in early childhood education.

By the time her youngest child had enrolled in kindergarten, Lilian had decided to go back to school, but not to continue her studies in modern languages and international politics. She wanted to take a course at San Mateo Community College in early childhood education. Dr. Mary Lane, who taught the course, encouraged Lilian to finish her undergraduate degree and become a co-op teacher. Lilian says she knew immediately that becoming a co-op teacher was what she wanted to do, but she also knew that she didn't really know enough to teach young children well.

She met with Dr. Edith Dowley, the director of the Stanford University Nursery School, hoping to get help in enrolling in a class on nursery teaching methods. Dr. Dowley discouraged her because Lilian had no undergraduate work in psychology and no degree. When Lilian reported her discouraging experience at the Stanford Nursery School to her mentor, Dr. Lane sent her to Professor Fanny Schaftel, a professor in the School of Education at Stanford University, who in turn sent her to Professor Pauline Sears. Dr. Sears quizzed her for over two hours. At the end of that meeting, Dr. Sears advised her to complete her bachelor's degree. Then she said, "We don't have a master's program so you'll have to do a Ph.D., and I'll get you a fellowship." With the help of a Newman Foundation Fellowship for immigrants and other fellowships, Lilian was able to complete her Ph.D. degree at Stanford in four years.

As Lilian describes it, when she began graduate work at Stanford University, she felt that she "had been living through a famine and had just arrived at a banquet!" She did well in her studies and received an award for the outstanding dissertation of the Stanford School of Education of 1968. When she was offered the position of Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, the Katz family decided to move to the Midwest.

In her third year as a junior faculty member in 1970, Lilian was asked by Dean J. Myron Atkin to "take over" the ERIC Clearinghouse on Early Childhood Education. "Just give it a try," said Mike, "We'll support you." She continued as a professor at the University of Illinois for 32 years, officially retiring from the professorship in August of 2000. She remains the co-director of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.

While university teaching occupied much of her time in these years, her career as an international consultant gathered momentum as well. In August of 1974, she was asked by UNESCO to conduct a preschool teacher-training seminar in Barbados. Lilian describes her first overseas experience there as a major influence in understanding the challenges involved in learning how others define their situations, problems, and solutions. Since that first visit, she has worked extensively with early childhood educators there and on 11 other Caribbean islands. Lilian believes that she continues to learn more from each trip to the islands.

Another major influence on her career began in the early 1980s, when she worked closely with her colleague Dr. James Raths. They offered a seminar on research on teacher education together, conducted research with a group of students in the Research on Teacher Education Unit in the College of Education, made presentations at conferences, published papers, and together edited several books on teacher education. Lilian describes Dr. Raths as a major supporter of her work and an important influence on her ideas and teaching. Some of his interesting and provocative ideas can be read in his paper in this volume.

The Impact of Lilian Katz on Early Childhood Education

Lilian Katz has demonstrated leadership in the field of early childhood education in the United States and around the world in ways almost too numerous to mention here.

She has been a frequent contributor to the early childhood literature. Lilian has authored more than 150 publications, including articles, chapters, and books about early childhood education, teacher education, child development, and parenting (see the Katz bibliography in this volume). The book *Talks with Teachers of Young Children. A Collection* (1995) is a compilation of her best-known early essays and several recent ones. In 1989, she wrote *Engaging Children's Minds: The Project Approach* (with S. C. Chard), a book that continues to influence the education of preservice and inservice teachers in early childhood education and is credited with playing a major role in reviving interest in project work in early childhood education. A second edition of *Engaging Children's Minds* was published in 2000. Another major work on the Project Approach, titled *Young Investigators: The Project Approach in the Early Years* (with J. H. Helm), was published early in 2001. Her publications alone guarantee Lilian Katz a place among the most influential early childhood educators of this era.

Other professional contributions abound. Following several years of work on a series titled "Current Topics in Early Childhood Education" (Ablex Publishing), Dr. Katz founded *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* and served as editor-in-chief during its first six years of publication. She is currently chair of the editorial board of the *International Journal of the Early Years* published in the United Kingdom. Most recently, Dr. Katz became editor of another journal, *Early Childhood Research & Practice* (http://ecrp.uiuc.edu), which began publication in early 1999 as the first peer-reviewed, Internet-only, journal in early education.

She also was one of the founders of the Illinois Association for the Education of Young Children and served as its first president. In addition, she served as vice president of the National Association for the

Education of Young Children (NAEYC) from 1986 to 1990 and later was elected president of NAEYC, serving from 1992-1994.

Dr. Katz has guided the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education (ERIC/EECE) for more than 30 years. This role has contributed to her scholarship on the principles of practice and the dissemination of education-related information to diverse audiences. As part of both the culture of research and the culture of practice, her work has been influential in both of these areas. She has often described her dissemination role as that of translator and interpreter between researchers and educators.

In addition to her record of influential publications, Lilian has played an important role in the development of the contemporary field of early childhood education. She literally "wrote the book" on professionalism in early childhood education, as the first person to write about ethical issues in the field (Katz, 1977). She served on the NAEYC Commission to Revise the Position Paper on Developmentally Appropriate Practices (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). In a time of great emphasis on academic achievement and accountability, she continues to be a strong voice in support of the importance of the development of social competence in the early years.

Lilian has long been an active (as well as a reflective) voice in early childhood education. Long ago, she served on one of the first groups that met to design the CDA credential. She was also involved in the Planned Variation Experiment of Head Start. Most recently, she was asked by the National Academy of Sciences to serve on a committee to take part in the task of sorting out the issues related to early childhood pedagogy (Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2001).

Over the years, much of her energy has been devoted to early childhood teacher education. As one of her colleagues has written,

> Much of her contribution is based on her own work with teachers of young children, in their classrooms and hers. Wherever she is, whether before an audience of thousands or sitting at a table in an Italian coffee bar, Lilian manages to imbue her stories about children with her own questions about the role of adults in children's lives. Her curiosity, her perseverance, and her openness to new ideas and understandings have contributed to her role as a leader and a visionary in the field. (Rebecca New, personal communication, 2000)

The many students to whom Lilian has been a mentor in her 32 years of teaching have benefited from her guidance, her honesty, and her generosity. She has mentored students from around the world and continues to demonstrate her commitment to the professional development of her students, to beginning teachers and faculty, and to her colleagues.

Well known around the world as an early childhood leader and role model, Lilian continues to observe early childhood professionals at work in other countries and to speak at international conferences, symposia, and workshops. These events allow her to learn about and share information on the early childhood practices she observes in other cultures, such as those in Reggio Emilia, Italy. She has lectured in all 50 U.S. states and in 43 countries, and she has held visiting posts at universities in Australia, Canada, England, Germany, India, Israel, the West Indies (Barbados campus), and many parts of the United States. In 1997, she served as Nehru Professor at the University of Baroda in India.

She is the recipient of numerous honors, including two Fulbright Awards (India and New Zealand), an Honorary Doctor of Letters degree (DLitt.) from Whittier College in Whittier, California, and an Honorary Doctor of Letters degree from Göteborg University in Sweden.

Lilian Katz's scholarly work in such areas as the distinctions between mothering and teaching, parenting preschoolers, children's social development, teacher growth and development, dispositions as a goal of education, the differences between self-esteem and narcissism, mixed-age grouping, and the Project Approach have substantially enriched the knowledge base of our field. She continues to reflect on the conventional wisdom of our field and to take issue with our most dearly held preconceptions. Few others of her generation have contributed so much to the development of the field of early childhood education.

The Papers in This Volume

The contents of this volume are divided into 11 topical strands. The strands echo some of Lilian's major areas of interest throughout her long career and reflect her impact on those individuals who make up the field of early childhood education—teachers, researchers, policy makers, and teacher educators. The strands are:

- Celebrating the Project Approach
- Designing Curriculum for the Early Years
- Preparing Teachers to Work with Diverse Populations
- Preparing Teachers for the Changing Early Childhood Classroom
- International Perspectives on Early Childhood Education
- Enjoying the Diversity of All Classrooms
- The Project Approach Revisited
- School Change
- Dispositions as Goals in Early Childhood Education
- Preparing Teachers for the Project Approach
- On Communication and Dissemination

Celebrating the Project Approach

In this strand, the first paper is by Mary Jane Elliott, a teacher in a preschool in Hong Kong. Lilian first went to Hong Kong in the 1980s, invited by UNICEF to do a week-long seminar on the Project Approach, and Mary Jane was one of the teachers who attended the seminar. "There is no assurance that busy and happy children are learning anything!" stated Lilian at the seminar. "I left that seminar feeling wounded, but energized, knowing my teaching would never be the same," writes Mary Jane. One of Lilian's favorite anecdotes about the power of the Project Approach is recounted in this paper, in Mary Jane's description of her students' learning during their attempts to measure the height of the building in which the Hong Kong International School is located.

The second paper in this strand is by Sylvia Chard, Lilian's long-time student, friend, and colleague. Lilian and Sylvia have worked together for many years on the Project Approach, most notably as co-authors of *Engaging Children's Minds* (1989, 2000). She reports on the work of two groups of teachers who implemented the Project Approach after inservice and preservice training. Quotes from the teachers suggest, again, the power of the Project Approach in changing teachers' ideas of what young children are capable of doing and learning.

The third paper, prepared by teachers from Fredericton, Canada, where Lilian visited in 1992, concerns documentation of children's projects. Anne Hunt, Pamela Nuttall Nason, and Pam Whitty have focused primarily "on Katz's intention that 'the major goal of education is to engage the mind of the learner, aesthetically, morally, and spiritually.'" The teachers learned the importance and centrality of documentation when they realized that "the very act of trying to make visible what one knows is what prompts the search for deeper understanding...."

Designing Curriculum for the Early Years

Diane Trister Dodge and Toni Bickart start this section of papers by describing three curriculum frameworks that respond to the developmental stages of infants and toddlers, preschool and kindergarten children, and children in grades one through three. The authors also stress the importance of curriculum implementation, professional development, and involving families if we are to carry out our commitment to developing high-quality early childhood programs.

Lisa Rosenthal, Andrea Michaelson, and Laura Weishaupt discuss ways to develop critical thinking skills and creativity while meeting educational standards and maintaining learning goals. Like Lilian, these teachers believe that it is possible to meet both kinds of goals in high-quality early education programs.

Janey Marquez and Gloria McGinty, trainers in a Head Start program in Arizona, took the opportunity of writing this paper to reflect on teacher change. They describe the effect of Lilian Katz's visit to Southwest Head Start to provide training in the Project Approach. According to a teacher's account quoted in their paper, Lilian asked, "How do you apply what your children are interested in into your curriculum?" leaving the teacher speechless, but, in that teacher's words, "I began observing the children in my class more closely and asked open-ended questions about their interests." Developing and implementing training, the authors stress, is hard work, but perseverance can help us "grow teachers" who see educating children as a powerful occupation.

Preparing Teachers to Work with Diverse Populations

As the children in early childhood programs become more diverse, sensitivity to differing cultures among early childhood teachers becomes increasingly important. The first paper in this section, by Jeanne Helm, recounts a diversity-sensitivity workshop that changed the climate in an early childhood teacher education classroom in a community college.

The second paper in this section makes clear that there are many approaches to increasing early childhood teachers' sensitivity to the cultural and linguistic differences of their students. Cheryl Van Hook discusses the range of research focusing on the preparation of teachers to work in multicultural settings. She describes a developmental model depicting stages of cultural sensitivity and discusses using that model by applying the DMIS (Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity), a model that may be used with preservice teachers to assess the effectiveness of multicultural course content and methodology.

The final paper in this section is a case study of the International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit, by a former student of Lilian Katz, Navaz Peshotan Bhavnagri, with Sue Krolikowski and Thrity Vaswani. This case study documents the effectiveness of the Detroit International Institute in collaborating with other agencies to promote the well-being of culturally diverse immigrant children and families through interagency collaboration.

Roundtable I

Three papers were presented during the first Roundtable session. Patricia Ragan discusses a collaborative, site-based early childhood teacher preparation program at the University of Wisconsin at Green Bay that is a harbinger of the future of early childhood teacher education. She describes the traditional course (on-site) and the online core modules, field-based faculty mentors, and performance-based assessment tools used to measure preservice teacher outcomes. The second paper, by Naama Zoran, discusses the "inner voice" of the teacher and its relationship to teacher quality, focusing on how deliberation and critical reflection are employed to improve practice in a two-year early childhood teacher education program in which early childhood teachers meet every two weeks to discuss and reflect critically on their practice. The third paper, by Daungvan Bunnag, examines the classroom implementations of two teachers, compares them with Maria Montessori's original principles, and finds that they contained the essence of the Montessori method.

Preparing Teachers for the Changing Early Childhood Classroom

In the first paper in this strand, Carol Keyes cites Lilian's model of the distinctions between parent and teacher roles as she discusses a general theoretical approach to understanding teacher-parent partnerships. Her approach draws from the ecological systems perspective as well as from a social system perspective.

Nancy File and Dominic Gullo report on a study examining preservice teachers' beliefs about primary classroom practice, finding some interesting differences between students focused on early childhood education and those focused on elementary education.

Darlene DeMarie discusses how she was drawn to the experimental approach in her own teaching, based on her preservice education and experience. As support for her own experimental approach, Dr. DeMarie states that Lilian Katz "recommended that when we try to help others with their teaching we phrase suggestions in experimental form." Although she learned the experimental approach outside her education classes, DeMarie suggests that students should find support for an experimental approach from their preservice education programs.

International Perspectives on Early Childhood Education: Barbados and Mexico

A symposium for Lilian Katz would not be complete without an international focus. Edith Cisneros-Cohernour, Astrid Cisneros, and Robert Moreno focus on Mexico, and Barbara Parris focuses on Barbados, to provide that perspective in discussions of curriculum reform and its challenges, and teacher-education reform, in their respective countries.

Enjoying the Diversity of All Classrooms

Debbie Reese and Jean Mendoza, two doctoral students of Lilian Katz, presented an analysis of some of the pitfalls and possibilities in choosing multicultural literature to use with young children. Their thought-provoking analysis of some popular children's literature will be of interest to teachers.

Tamar Jacobson provides an ethnography of an anti-bias support-supervision group for teachers of young children. This support group provided an opportunity to support teachers interested in making some changes in their personal and professional lives by challenging their biases.

Beverly Clark stresses that there are no negative effects for children who are truly bilingual. She urges teachers to provide support for language learning and interaction. "Through the child's own talk and interactions with others, their own ideas take shape, and they have the opportunity to explore what other people are thinking and go beyond their own personal experience," states Clark.

Roundtable II

Three papers were presented as part of the second Roundtable session. Teresa Vasconcelos discusses an ethnographic study of the practice of one Portuguese kindergarten teacher whom she observed throughout most of two years. Tom Drummond describes the concept of "Enterprise Talk"—a practical guide for talking to children in times of difficulty, and responding with effective positive statements, which becomes an instrument for integrity and authenticity in the early childhood classroom. Patricia Steinhaus describes a study that attempted to integrate the differing perspectives of reading specialists and early childhood specialists by exploring the role that language plays as an instructional strategy.

The Project Approach Revisited

Current interest in the Project Approach is high. We received so many submissions on the Project Approach that the papers on this topic were divided into three sections (see the first section, "Celebrating the Project Approach," and the section on "Preparing Teachers for the Project Approach"). Sallee Beneke describes the importance of documentation in a lab school setting and explains how documentation can also be a useful teaching tool for early childhood teacher educators.

In this part of the conference, Ann-Marie Clark, a former student of Lilian, discusses the Project Approach as an "avenue of engagement" for the child that fosters curiosity, creativity, and communication. "As Dewey reminded us, the purpose of education is to develop in each child the dispositions necessary to become a lifelong learner," states Ann-Marie Clark. Betty Leibovich also discusses the Project Approach and its role in early education. Eunju Yun discusses the Project Approach as a component of "meaningful life," reminding us that "a project may resemble a 'real-life situation' more than play or systematic instruction does."

School Change

School change can take many forms. Karen VanderVen starts the first paper in this section by quoting from a presentation Lilian made to the Pittsburgh AEYC: "Let's call a one-year moratorium on dinosaurs." Her paper discusses "the legacy of Lilian Katz in a proposal for a 'Katzian Early Childhood Teacher Preparation System.'" Her paper deals with (1) translating available empirical and theoretical knowledge into effective practice, and (2) gleaning from Lilian's work ideas for a model of teacher and caregiver preparation that would yield the best possible practitioners.

Shareen Abramson discusses professional development as a catalyst for program change following two visits from Lilian Katz (in 1997 and 1998) to Fresno, California, crediting Lilian with the model for professional development that gave direction to the local professional development programs that the center now sponsors.

Ellen Dodge, Barbara Dulik, and Jon Kulhanek discuss philosophical change in early childhood programs, using as an example the case of their own school's process of change. This engaging account documents the transition from a teacher-directed program to an emergent, child-centered philosophy among staff, parents, and children.

Roundtable III

The third Roundtable began with a paper by Sara Wilford on the connections between literacy goals and other aspects of early childhood classrooms in which play is valued and literacy is fostered. Claudia Shuster synthesizes research on children's emotional development and the development of their emotional intelligence. Her paper includes a discussion of specific scaffolding strategies teachers can use to support students' emotional development. Dong Hwa Choi explores the effects of social skills training, finding a significant improvement in maintaining positive play relationships with peers.

Dispositions as Goals in Early Childhood Education

The disposition to be intellectually curious can be fostered and supported by high-quality curricula. Lucia French, Kathleen Conezio, and Marylou Boynton describe the ScienceStart™ curriculum in the first paper of this section. The power of the curriculum to engage young children at the same time that standardized tests show rapid growth is discussed.

Debbie Noyes writes about developing the disposition to be a reader and the role of teachers in encouraging this disposition, drawing from Katz's work on dispositions. The paper explores the characteristics of learning environments for young children at home and school that support early literacy and the disposition to read.

Cathleen M. Kearn proposes the merging of Katz's work on children's social competence with Vygotsky's concept of scaffolding, drawing from Katz and McClellan's work on fostering children's social competence. She stresses that early childhood educators have a special responsibility to intervene when children are very young to help them learn to regulate their own behavior.

Preparing Teachers for the Project Approach

In this third section on the Project Approach, the focus is on preservice and inservice teacher education. Lorraine DeJong discusses how project-based learning can help early childhood preservice teachers to acquire a knowledge base that can strengthen their effectiveness as teachers of young children.

Kathleen Glaser discusses how, through staff development following a presentation by Lilian in Orlando, Florida, in 1993, the Hollywood Elementary School in southern Maryland implemented developmentally appropriate practices, multiage grouping, and project learning. The paper highlights the "challenges and joys" of Hollywood Elementary's growth as a professional learning community.

Gera Jacobs describes a long-term project undertaken by students in an early childhood education course at the University of South Dakota. In the course of this project, students chose to investigate kindergarten scheduling; interviewed parents, teachers, and children; used spreadsheets to analyze the results; and as a final product, presented their findings at the university undergraduate research showcase.

On Communication and Dissemination

The effective dissemination of information has long been a topic of interest to Lilian Katz, in part because of her association with the ERIC Clearinghouse. In her writings on this subject, she has examined the roles and perspectives of participants in the production, dissemination, and reception of information. After an interesting discussion of communication theory, Karen Peterson discusses how difficult it is to sort through the information on early childhood education. It is in the role of "pilot" that the "invisible mentor" is most influential in women's learning and in helping them develop a conceptual framework for early childhood learning.

Roundtable IV

The fourth and final Roundtable consisted of three papers. Mary Jo Graham and Steven Banks present the results of a one-year qualitative study of 12 preschool children concerning their initial computer use. Barbara Lowenthal discusses the effects of abuse and neglect on the neurological, psychological, and cognitive development of the young child, concluding that we must all advocate for preventive efforts and efforts that promote resilience in the young victims of abuse. Riyo Kadota, Tess Bennett, and Dawn Thomas present the findings of a survey of Early Head Start programs in Region V (Midwest region) in four areas. Major findings of the survey identified teenage parenting as one of the highest areas of concern.

Looking Back—And Looking Ahead

James Raths' presence at the symposium—and his paper—reminded us of Lilian's early work with him as co-editors of the series "Advances in Teacher Education" from 1984-1991. He speaks about research that suggests teacher candidates' beliefs about teaching, learning, assessment, and related issues are quite strong and serve as filters to "keep out" ideas they learn in teacher education classes. He reminds us that teacher educators are convinced that many times their efforts are overshadowed by the qualities and characteristics that teacher candidates bring to the program and by the powerful influences of the school culture into which new teachers are usually promptly acculturated.

Finally, in "Last Class Notes," a series of notes summarizing important points developed over more than 30 years of teaching a graduate course titled "Early Childhood Curriculum Trends and Issues," Lilian Katz sums up what she hopes students in her classes will remember from her teaching. It is fitting for this paper to be last in the proceedings. It contains many lessons for us all.

Conclusion

What cannot be captured in this volume are the comments and support of colleagues at the presymposium dinner and other gatherings during the course of the symposium: Dean Susan Fowler and Violet Harris, chair of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, welcomed attendees and shared their own "Lilian stories"; Stacie Goffin eloquently toasted Lilian and spoke of her many contributions to the field; Rebecca New "roasted" her and described her long-standing correspondence with Lilian on issues of mutual interest and, at times, disagreement; Lilian's colleagues from Barbados offered a wonderful video collage from friends in the West Indies; Barbara Willer, deputy executive director of NAEYC, made a brief presentation; and many other friends reminisced informally with Lilian. Her children also played a role by providing a skit about Lilian (as the reluctant traveler), and her son Steve played the cello for the assembled group.

We thank all who traveled to central Illinois to celebrate her remarkable career with Lilian, and we hope the present volume captures the flavor of the symposium. Of course, those who know her well are not surprised to learn that Lilian has not really retired but continues to explore old—and new—areas of interest!

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Celebrating the Project Approach

Project Approach: Celebrating Human Dimensions of Learning

Mary Jane Elliott

Abstract

This paper presents reflections on the power of project work as it enhances the character development and self-awareness of the young child. Examples from projects illustrate the development of these human values based on project investigations of 4- and 5-year-old children from Hong Kong International School. The first set of investigations focuses on honoring the wisdom of the individual child. Emphasis is placed on respecting the child as learner and the teacher as facilitator. Several examples are highlighted: (1) Measuring the height of an apartment building: Should a child be permitted to try doing an impossible task? What is the role of the teacher when a child makes a mistake? (2) Filling a bottle with water: When a naïve hypothesis is suggested for investigation, can that topic be worthwhile pursuing? The second set of investigations focuses on highlighting the social development of the child: (1) Playing the role of St. Nick: Whose shoes get the treats? How does a sense of social awareness develop as this question is answered? (2) Engaging in "on-the-job" training: To what extent does working with professionals at school create a learning community? Answers to these questions help illuminate the dimensions of "humanness" that are apparent in project work and that are worthy of understanding and celebrating.

Twelve years ago, UNICEF invited Lilian Katz to present a week-long seminar in Hong Kong titled "Engaging Children's Minds: The Project Approach." I attended this seminar as a confident teacher, proud of the curriculum I had developed. My children were happy and busy learning at school.

During her talks, Lilian presented images and ideas that shocked my understanding of what it meant to be an excellent early childhood educator. She raised questions I had to answer. She called my "achievements" into question. I remember her saying, "There is no assurance that busy and happy children are learning anything!" I left that seminar feeling wounded, but energized, knowing my teaching would never be the same again.

Within months of the seminar, I "engaged" my mind in learning how to initiate project work, and I have been doing projects ever since. I can truthfully say that my best teaching moments and my children's best learning moments have occurred in the midst of doing projects.

In this paper, I will give personal reflections on the power of project work as it enhances the character development and self-awareness of the young child. These examples, based on projects with 4- and 5-year-olds at Hong Kong International School, will highlight the development of important human values. Among these are learning to build a community, to work collaboratively, to experiment with new ideas, and to foster a caring relationship for others.

Teachers and Children as Partners in Learning

Each day, I appreciate more and more the wisdom of young children. They come to school filled with ideas, hunches, and a wealth of life experiences. They have questions to ask. They are looking for partners as they explore new areas of learning. With the child as learner and the teacher as co-learner and facilitator, a strong team is formed.

Measuring the Height of Hainan Court

Adjacent to our school is Hainan Court, a seven-story apartment building, housing 14 families, including the family of a child in my class. We decided to study this building as a class project. Investigations ranged from determining the number of windows to conducting interviews with all the tenants in search of answers to questions such as "How many toothbrushes does your family own?"

Because this project was one of my first, I carefully screened which of the children's questions we would use for an investigation. Questions I considered too difficult, I ignored. Why should I have children work on questions that were beyond their ability to answer?

As the project neared completion, one 5-year-old remembered a question that he originally posed that was left unanswered: "Aren't we ever going to measure how tall this building is?"

Feeling cornered and a bit stunned, I asked for suggestions on how to proceed with this investigation. One child proposed that we use a regular ruler to measure, and another put forth that we try a meter stick. I chuckled secretly at these suggestions. Off to the apartment building we marched, and much to the children's dismay, they discovered that measuring sticks were much too short, regardless of how far they stretched their arms above their heads.

Back at school, further thought and discussion continued. Eyeing the jump rope on the playground, one girl proposed that she stand on the ground and throw the rope up to the top of the building. Piggybacking on that idea, Johann exclaimed, "I've got it. We need a ball of string. A 'down' teacher will throw the string to the 'up' teacher on top of the building, and she can catch it."

Off we rushed, delighted with the experiments we planned to do, trying the jump-rope idea first. Even though several jump ropes were tied together, they proved to be too short. Given the information the children gathered from this investigation, they modified the rooftop experiment. They decided it would be better for the "up" teacher to throw the ball of string to the "down" teacher!

You can imagine the hush that came over the children as they waited for the ball of nylon string to be launched over the edge of the building and hit the ground. Screams of delight filled the air. In front of them was a full length of string the height of the building. We carefully marked the string and later measured it at school. Not one child was interested in the final calculation. The key learning experience was the fact that they had figured out how to measure the height of a very tall building.

From this experience, I learned never to disregard any question that a child seriously asks. The way that 5-year-olds solve problems, while not correct by any adult criterion, is not "incorrect" either. Their suggestions are entirely sensible and coherent within the framework of a child's way of knowing. Initially, I was classifying their questions as being too difficult, okay to investigate, or not worthy of our time. Filtering their questions revealed my lack of respect for the wisdom of young children.

Years ago, Piaget knew all about this phenomenon. He warned that a teacher's automatic reaction of putting the child right may curtail his future interest in solving problems. Practicing the art of making theories may be more valuable than learning the right answer. Piaget indicated that children have real understanding only of that which they invent themselves, and each time adults try to teach them something too quickly, we keep them from reinventing it themselves. As Lilian might put it, we would disengage their minds from thinking.

Piaget was not a classroom teacher and did not proclaim to have methods for pedagogical intervention with children in learning situations. Lilian Katz, together with Sylvia Chard and others, provide the link between the theories of Piaget and educational practice. Through project work, teachers acquire the ability to *listen* to children, and children learn to *listen* to each other. They build on the ideas of their classmates in a collaborative setting and are encouraged to formulate new theories. As teachers model respect for the young child as learner, children gain an understanding of what it means to respect others.

The Water Project

As I matured in my understanding of children and the value of project work, I came to value and appreciate all questions that children raise, even ones that seem initially naïve.

During the Water Project last November, a group of 4-year-old children wanted to water the outdoor plants. Equipped with bottles of water, we initiated our work and quickly found our bottles empty. "Where can we get more water?" they asked at once. Intense discussion followed. The children ruled out returning to the classroom to refill the bottles, because that meant walking up three flights of steps. No outdoor faucets were in sight. Liam, the youngest in the group, made a suggestion: "Let's sit on the bench, hold our bottles up and wait for it to rain." Before I had a chance to suggest that we gather more ideas before we decided what to do, the children quickly sat down and held up their bottles. I joined them. We sat there like statues, not saying a word, waiting for a downpour to replenish our water supply. Suddenly a loud noise was heard overhead, and Liam quickly announced, "It's thunder." His excitement was quickly dampened, not by rain, but by the realization that a jet was making the noise.

After exceedingly long minutes of silent waiting, Liam announced, "This is not working." One girl suggested that we look for someone who could tell us where to find water. In our search to locate someone to ask for assistance, Liam noticed a pipe extending from a cemented wall that was draining water from the mountainside into a bucket. The bucket was overflowing. The perfect solution to a difficult question appeared.

The children rushed to the bucket and quickly scooped a bottle across the top of the water. Much to their dismay the bottle contained only an inch of water. They tried again and again, each time being disappointed. Suddenly Guthrie pushed his bottle straight down into the bucket. Bubbles started to dance. When his bottle reappeared, it was filled to the brim with water. "That's how I fill my bottle in the bath tub," he boasted.

Children's real questions, regardless of their complexity, often yield amazing learning. Enabling children to trust their own judgment and pursue answers that are important to them helps them develop skills that will support their learning endeavors for years to come. The determined spirit evident in this project is a highly valued trait for every lifelong learner. An important dimension of learning is acquiring the disposition of active engagement in the learning process throughout our lives. Working with others in solving problems is an important part of early childhood education.

Social Awareness and Character Development

My second series of investigations focused on highlighting the development of social consciousness among children. Through serious dialogue and meaningful engagement, children become aware of their community and the important role they play in it.

The Shoe Project

During the Shoe Project last year, the children raised a pertinent question that deeply fascinated them. "How does St. Nick put candy in people's shoes?" Long conversations developed as the children decided that they would like to "be" St. Nick, but the critical issue focused on who would get the candy. The following is the actual conversation recorded by the teaching assistant, Neiva Balani.

> **Kristen**: "How about we put candy in everybody's shoes in the whole class!"
>
> **Alex**: "No, let's just have it ourselves."
>
> **Kristen**: "But if everyone doesn't have one [candy], they'll be sad."
>
> **Alex**: "Why don't we just eat it. I really want one."
>
> **Tommy**: "We can give everybody, but it's too much people."
>
> **Charley**: "Let's take off our shoes now."
>
> **Kristen**: "No, somebody else's shoes. We ask them to close their eyes and we put candy in. Then they can eat it."
>
> **Charley**: "We can dress up like him."
>
> **Tommy**: "Let's make a mask."
>
> **Kristen**: "Let's put candy in the principal's shoe."

Charley: "She'll be so happy."

Kristen: "Yes, Mrs. Hall's shoes cause she is so sad." [Mrs. Hall's husband had recently died suddenly of cancer, and the children were very aware of her situation.]

Charley: "We can give it to the girl who washes the bathroom."

Alex: "How about us?"

Charley: "The nurse too. She always helps children. And the teachers. And my Mom's shoes."

Tommy: "Ask them to put their shoe off, and then later we'll dress up and take back their shoes with candy in."

Enabling the children to have a focused, heart-to-heart conversation resulted in their discussing a serious topic in complete openness, challenging each other's opinions in an honoring manner. In the end, they moved from "me first" to "others first" in a manner that would shock most adults. The principal was overwhelmed with the kindness expressed by the children. But it was the parents of these children who had tears in their eyes as they heard about the care and love their children were sharing with others.

The Careers Project

My final illustration focuses on the profound effect the Careers Project had on the social milieu of the entire community. After learning about careers in the community, we initiated a project to learn all we could about careers at our school. We walked through the school observing carefully people at work. The children brainstormed a list of jobs they noticed and then selected the career they wanted to learn more about. The principal, nurse, receptionist, handyman, bus director, PE teacher, librarian, juice lady, mailman, and cleaning lady were highlighted. Not one child suggested working with a normal classroom teacher!

In teams of two, the children participated in "on-the-job" training with their career trainer. At the completion of this exercise, the children felt qualified to operate the school switchboard, run the copy machine, laminate posters, collate booklets, fill juice orders, fix bikes, and even clean toilets! The children agreed that if any one of the job trainers got sick, they were willing and ready to be the substitutes.

Even more remarkable is the fact that the relationship between the children and the trainers strengthened throughout the year. Whenever the cleaning lady entered the room, she was greeted. Care was taken to make her job easier. Children waved to their job trainers when they passed them in the hall. When repairs were needed in the classroom, they knew whom to call. They appreciated the care and help of many of the adults at our school. In addition, the children volunteered to help with photocopying, faxing, and laminating. They were developing a genuine sense of responsibility for their own learning community.

Honor and Engage Young Children's Minds

Initially project work is a method that enables the teacher to engage children's minds in meaningful learning. Yet the more we respect and trust the wisdom of young children, the greater the opportunity for learning. Giving children the possibility to experiment, make mistakes, re-think, and try again is a gift that develops the learning potential at an early age. Opportunities for developing a community of care lie dormant in a wide variety of projects that can be brought to fruition when teachers enable children to wrestle with situations that touch social issues.

Learning situations that honor and engage young children's minds and awaken the love that lies deep in their hearts make project work worthy of our understanding and celebration. I thank Lilian for being my mentor in project work and enabling me to appreciate anew the wisdom of young children. In turn, I hope that my life will be blessed by many more such powerful moments of teaching and learning.

The Challenges and the Rewards: A Study of Teachers Undertaking Their First Projects

Sylvia C. Chard

Abstract

This paper looks at some of the commonly experienced challenges and rewards reported by teachers who have reflected in writing on their first experiences with the Project Approach. The work of two groups of teachers is reported here. One group consisted of 12 teachers in Texas, who implemented the Project Approach in their classrooms following a one-day workshop. The workshop took place at the beginning of the school year and was organized by the school district for all elementary school teachers. The second group consisted of 9 teachers in Canada who were teacher-members of a graduate course on the Project Approach. From the different stories emerged some interesting issues for teacher educators to consider as they help teachers in the early stages of adopting the Project Approach and establishing it in their classrooms. Some teachers found that their current practice and educational philosophy allowed them to take to project work with ease and enthusiasm. Other teachers who were keen to adapt their teaching to include projects had difficulty making the considerable adjustments they found were necessary to make child choice and decision making a part of regular practice in their classrooms. Many of the concerns and delights of working this way with children are shared by teachers everywhere.

Teachers face significant challenges when they make changes to the way they teach. The easiest response to these challenges would seem to be a return to more familiar ways of teaching. However, many teachers persist with new ideas and overcome the difficulties that arise. What are the incentives to continue with the new strategies in the face of challenge? For what reasons would teachers take on the difficulties of changing their practice? What are teachers saying about their efforts to teach differently?

This paper looks at some of the commonly experienced challenges and rewards reported by teachers who have reflected in writing on their first experiences with the Project Approach. Issues that emerged from the teachers' accounts of their experiences indicate areas for teacher educators or administrators to consider as they help teachers in the early stages of adopting the Project Approach.

The Teachers

The work of two groups of teachers is reported here. One group consisted of 12 teachers in Texas, who implemented the Project Approach in their classrooms following a one-day workshop. The workshop took place at the beginning of the school year and was organized by the school district for all elementary school teachers. The second group consisted of 9 teachers in Canada who were teacher-members of a graduate course on the Project Approach.

As the school year progressed, 20 of the teachers in Texas met weekly to share their experiences and to support one another throughout the process of developing a project. Halfway through the year, 12 of these teachers volunteered to write about their first project experiences. The writings of the Canadian teachers were recorded on a WebBoard discussion facility used throughout their 13-week course. In this paper, the teachers' writing is paraphrased and quoted under the headings of themes common to both groups.

Minimal Change

Several of the teachers in this study committed themselves to project work thinking that not much would have to change in their classrooms. They were under the impression that the way they already worked with children was quite compatible with the Project Approach and that they would just implement a few strategic adaptations before being able to claim that they were doing what their school board or course required of them. However, transferring what is learned in a course or workshop to the classroom involves more adjustments than teachers or teacher educators sometimes anticipate (Stein, Smith, & Silver, 1999, p. 265).

Some teachers did indeed find that their current practice and educational philosophy allowed them to take to project work with ease, enthusiasm, and a sense of affirmation. Other teachers who seemed just as keen to adapt their teaching to include projects had some difficulty. One teacher wrote in the early weeks of the course:

> Throughout my teaching experience, I have always taught using themes and units. I always thought that this was the only way to teach. As I read through the material and participate in discussions, I realize more and more how limiting themes can be. Themes do allow for the teacher to think of creative ways of introducing and exploring curriculum, yet do not allow the children to have a voice in where their learning is going. We usually brainstormed and mapped out our entire unit with little if any input from children.

Selection of a Topic of Study for the Project

At first, both groups of teachers thought about how this new way of working would fit with their existing practice. For some teachers, the adjustment was easier than for others. Some of the difficulties were circumstantial, and some resided within the teacher herself. The Texas school district teachers had the advantage of being in a school where everyone was encouraged to do projects. However, of the teachers in the Project Approach course, some teachers taught in schools where they were expected to continue to work in partnership with other teachers who were not taking the course. Teachers in these circumstances were often not free to choose the topic of study but had to fit in with commonly planned themes of study. For example, one third-grade teacher was faced with the topic "oceans" far from any ocean coastline. She solved the problem of the topic by selecting the topic of "boats" as a focus for her combined grade 1-2 class in Canada. There were local rivers and lakes where boats were used (although it was still a problem for her since it was winter, and as the lakes and rivers were iced over, the boats were all still stored away for the winter).

Another teacher described how she decided on her kindergarten project topic to fit with a school tradition: "We had already planned our annual field trip to the fire station, so my co-workers and I decided to start there. I realize now that this might not be the best way to start a project, but I had to begin somewhere."

Because of the different contexts in which they worked, it was important for teachers to see different ways to incorporate project work into their programs. "There is no single way to incorporate project work into a curriculum or teaching style; the significant feature is that some time is allocated to experiences in which children make careful observations and inquiries into worthwhile topics over a sustained period of time" (Katz & Chard, 2000, p. 3).

Professional Goals

For many teachers, it was important to feel that their own beliefs about teaching were affirmed or underscored in the new approach. One teacher wrote, "As I began to research the Project Approach, I noticed that the students were more involved in their own learning. I have always believed that the students need to be more responsible for their own learning, and this was a good way to begin."

At the beginning of the course, teachers were asked to review their professional development and articulate some goals for themselves. One teacher wrote:

> I run a day care center and teach kindergarten half time. My in-basket is always full! I want to enjoy the challenges ahead without being anxious.

> Second, I want to enjoy observing my children interact in learning that they take charge of. I have no idea what to expect. Third, I wish to facilitate the parents' involvement in our kindergarten class. It will be so great having parents and family members coming to class as experts!

The goals that teachers wrote about most frequently included the following intentions:

- to increase the amount of choice, decision making, and self-direction given to children;
- to help children develop their interests;
- to respond to children as individuals (not only as members of a group);
- to assess and demonstrate children's learning; and
- to document the project as a whole.

Planning to Begin Projects with Children

The teachers planned to develop project work through the three phases proposed in the practical guide books (Chard, 1998a, 1998b). The three phases in the life of a project are designed to help teachers develop a structure for openness in their classrooms—openness to children's ideas, interests, questions, individual learning styles, and competencies. Recommended for the first phase is a list of processes that develop in a complementary way. The teachers are encouraged to listen to the children's accounts of their prior experiences of the topic and to invite the children to represent their experiences in a variety of ways. The teachers help the children to explain their experiences and to wonder about questions they have about the topic. The teachers are asked to develop a topic web based on the experience and knowledge of the children and to write to the parents informing them of the project. It was also suggested that they begin planning for the second phase of the project with possibilities for fieldwork and invitations to experts to visit the classroom.

Phase 1: Getting Started with the Projects

To help them prepare to invite the children to talk about what they knew, teachers in the workshop and class were encouraged to imagine the kinds of experiences of the topic individual children in their class might have had. It was also suggested that they might model telling a personal anecdote by sharing with the children a relevant experience of their own. Several teachers had not shared personal experiences with children before. These teachers were surprised at what they learned: "It has been fascinating watching the children explore and share their experiences with each other."

One kindergarten teacher described how she imagined what the children's experiences with the topic might be, and this process of prediction led her to think of experts in the community who might help with the project:

> While thinking of all the ideas linked with my topic, I realized how the process had widened my scope of thought. I imagined being a child at the park and saw it through a child's eyes. That was really interesting and exciting. Then I started thinking of potential experts and additional field visits. For me, the enthusiasm began to blossom during this stage. Possible expert visitors include: a city worker responsible for trimming trees (s/he could demonstrate the tools), a snow plow operator, owners of a snow clearing company, a snow expert (a student's father), a finishing carpenter (a student's mother).

Even when constrained by curriculum requirements to select topics that were far away and not in their firsthand experience (such as "space"), teachers noticed a change in the responses of the children. In the first phase of the project, the children became more interested and involved with the topic than usual. The teachers generally attributed this higher level of interest to the effectiveness of the new strategies they were using to develop the children's interest in the topic.

A teacher of a grade 3-4 class studying "space" wrote, "I began by listening to the students telling their personal stories about what they had experienced with looking at planets, galaxies, and constellations. I was amazed to hear all the questions the students had about the planets."

An initial discussion of holiday customs by a second-grade class just before Christmas gave rise to a spontaneous shift from making a topic web with words to writing questions on a list to be investigated later. The teacher wrote:

> We began a word web with Christmas as our starting point. Comments exploded! We added to the web, reorganized, and grouped words into various categories. Questions followed. "I wonder why or from where?" was coming from everyone. That led us to listing all the questions on the board. Some examples were:
>
> 1. Why do we have Christmas trees? Why do people decorate them?
> 2. Are reindeer real? Where do they live?
> 3. Why do we give gifts?
> 4. Why was mistletoe hanging all around, and where does it come from?
> 5. What did people use as lights on trees before electricity?
>
> Angel wanted to know: "Why do people put angels on the top of their Christmas trees?" Many more questions were asked, and they were all listed.

Growing Interest and Momentum... How All the Children Became Involved

The teacher of the first-grade project on boats in Texas wrote:

> They each then shared their experiences of seeing, hearing, and being on a boat, and we found some had never been on a boat. After sharing their personal stories, they wanted to write them down and make a class book. When they shared their stories, they began to realize that they had been on different kinds of boats and for different reasons. We began listing the different kinds of boats. The children were so excited about learning the different kinds of boats and their uses I could hardly keep up. We organized our webbing on kinds of boats, and then I let the children choose which kind of boat study group they wanted to work in.

The letters that teachers sent to parents explained how the children would be doing things a little differently from their other work as they engaged with the project. For instance, the work would be kept in school and not sent home until the end of the project, and the parents would be invited to help share their expertise in the school as well as helping their children with homework. Teachers commented on the parents' appreciation of this approach:

> I wanted to inform the parents about what we were going to be doing. I sent a letter home explaining the topic we were going to be studying. All the project work was to be done at school. I wanted this to be the students' work and not the parents'. I would send home books for the parents to help read to the children, but this was all I sent home for project work. Parents loved this and started coming and being very involved with the project. They would send things and were always eager to help.

There were teachers who started with small-scale examples of project work who did not get any further than these for several months. Getting started in earnest required a considerable degree of trust, faith in the unknown, confidence in one's own ability to meet the as yet unimagined demands of children who would become proactive in their learning. One teacher describes how she started what she hoped would become a project but that was still a theme: "I was leading my class in a project on the subject of pets. In the middle of my carefully planned developments, I noticed that my kindergarten and first-grade children were exhibiting symptoms of extreme boredom as opposed to fascinated interest. I said to myself, 'This Project Approach is just not working.'" Then after a weekend, this same teacher experienced a memorable event that proved to be the beginning of her most authentic experience of project work. A child who had been to the ocean a long way from the school brought 10 hermit crabs and tipped them out into the sandbox. At this point, the teacher quickly learned how projects were different. She wrote:

> To my surprise, I heard a few really perceptive questions in amongst the chatter over the crabs. I decided to get a tape recorder so the children could take turns speaking their questions into the recorder, as they understood the process of turn taking at the recorder better than they understood exactly how many questions I could answer at one time. Besides, I did not have answers for many of their questions, and I did not want to miss any good ones. The tape recorder enabled me to sift their questions and also provided the

> opportunity to later investigate the various questions so that we could all benefit from the knowledge found. I was thrilled to notice that many of their questions were carefully considered and of a higher level than they normally displayed.

The story of her project work unfolded on the basis of this single day during which she experienced most of the features of good project work in an accelerated and condensed form.

Many teachers experienced the willingness of children to talk about the topic. They shared experiences, knowledge, and questions in a more naturally conversational way than the teachers had usually heard in class discussion. The teachers were able to take a step back and listen to the children talking and listening to each other without the level of teacher direction in the discussion process that usually characterized attempts to get the children to talk about what they were studying. One teacher whose kindergarten class was studying birds wrote:

> In the midst of all the talking about the children's experiences with birds, one of the children asked if maybe one day he could bring his bird. I said, "Sure, I'll talk to your mom about it." (In reality, I was thinking he would bring his bird within the next couple of weeks, after I had talked to his mom about the arrangements.) The next day came, and I had a bird show up in my room first thing in the morning. The little boy was so excited about bringing his bird that he couldn't wait another day. As the children walked into the room, they circled the bird cage and began to ask many questions. I let the little boy talk about his bird then pass it around as we held it. Before I knew it, children were telling stories about times they had seen birds at their home, pet stores, and outside. As days went by, I had children bringing in bird feeders and bird houses. There was even a day when we walked outside, and I could hear children telling each other to listen to the birds and observe the nests that were between buildings and in trees. I was beside myself, I had nothing to worry about—the children took control of "the bird project."

"Giving up Control" or "Taking on a New Role?"

In many cases, the teachers experienced the children's willingness to take responsibility for their ideas as the starting point for the momentum that developed in their projects. It seemed that the teachers' experience of the children's growing sense of ownership warned them to "give up control" as part of their role in supporting the children in their learning. Most teachers who share information about how their teaching changes as a result of teaching with the Project Approach use the expressions "letting go" or "giving up control." On further examination of what is meant by these phrases, they appear to refer to the traditional role many teachers of young children accept, that of directing what the children do.

The goal of this teacher direction appears to be that all children achieve similar benefits from any activity. The teachers have to exert "control" in order to direct the children's activity. Once this directing role is relinquished, it seems the teacher is free to listen and respond to children's own styles of speaking and their own original things to say. Divergent responses, rather than similar ones, are encouraged and valued for the additional information they provide. The responsibility of the teacher then becomes one of facilitating the children's conversations about the topic, listening and responding to their expressions of curiosity, wonder, and questioning. The teacher can help the children to investigate their questions and to represent what they learn by themselves or together with other children. The role is not that of a director but a support, model, advisor, coordinator of ideas, and provider of means to achieve intentions. As the teacher of the kindergarten and first-grade class said:

> I was fascinated that the questions were coming naturally from the children's curiosity and were not manufactured, nor had they been led in any way. What a rare learning opportunity to explore an interest the children had genuinely expressed on their own. Learning about the crabs was their idea and that made it far more meaningful to them. This had become *their* project; I just took advantage of the opportunity that presented itself.

Children's Ownership of Project Work

This teacher sensed that her willingness to give up control or to change her role from director to facilitator gave the children a sense of ownership of their project work. In order to feel ownership, people have to feel that they have some say in the way things are done. In order for children to feel ownership of a project, they have to be part of the planning and to see evidence that their ideas help to shape the way the work is planned. They have to authentically influence the directions of the investigations and the selection of representations that are used to document the knowledge, skills, and processes that have been learned in the study. For example, in the progress made in the first phase, children can contribute to the development of the project through the quality of the experiences they describe and represent. They can see the influence on the project of the interests they bring to the study. They can see how the limitations of their own abilities to explain their experience in response to the questions of others can lead to specially planned investigations.

The activities recommended for the first phase of a project can all be carried out in a way that is responsive to children's ideas. The teacher can feature the interaction among the activities throughout the first few days of the project and show the children how their ideas contribute to plans for the investigation of various aspects of the topic. This process is difficult for some teachers, especially for those who are used to planning separate teaching tasks and for whom a narrative account or "story of the children's learning" is not the way they have been accustomed to thinking about their teaching. However, here is the writing of a teacher who has been able to see how to put together all the different parts of the first phase of the Canadian project on boats (with grades 1 and 2):

> It has been fascinating watching the children explore and share their experiences with each other. Since I introduced the topic of boats on our schoolwide Beach Day, the children have been engaged in drawing, writing, constructing, and discussing boats. A lot of dramatic play has been occurring in and around the puppet theatre and big blocks.
>
> Many of the children are bringing in items from home to add to our classroom displays. A fishing net full of toy sharks is our Shark tank for the deep sea fishermen. The children have also hung up or displayed their representations in a variety of places in the classroom. Interest is high, and we are compiling a list of questions. Our topic web is growing as the children add bits each day.

An observer in this same classroom wrote:

> The teacher and her class made a display out of netting, seashells, and stuffed sea creatures, which the children are very proud of. What a wonderful environment to get the kids thinking and learning about boats. A person could not walk into the classroom and not know and feel the children's enthusiasm for learning about boats.

In a kindergarten/first-grade class beginning a study of the "human body," the teacher wrote about a naturally evolving sequence of events linking the first and second phases of the work. In her journal, one child, Rita, had begun to write about the human brain. The teacher offered her a tape so she could record her ideas and questions more efficiently. Here is the teacher's account of what happened next:

> She began describing all the things she had learned so far and started asking questions that she wondered about and wanted answers to about the brain. Rita knew, for example, that all living creatures have brains and that different parts of your brain control different parts of your body. She wondered what part of your brain controls certain parts of your body, and what part of your brain controls what you can do. John was listening. He said that he would like a tape too because he was interested in the heart. He spoke into his tape about his interest in the heart and that he knew that everyone had a heart, that it pumps blood, and he wanted to know how the heart worked with the brain. Then Brent offered to be partners with John because he wanted to know about blood and said they could work as a team since blood was what the heart pumped.

It sounds on the one hand as though these children all wanted to have a turn at using the tape recorder. This motive may have been a factor, but it is interesting that they knew that the teacher was interested in the information they would share by means of the tape. They seemed to understand that representing their knowledge was useful for helping them formulate the questions they would later investigate in the second phase of the project. These children were showing not only an interest in tape recording but in the process of studying a topic in depth. They were talking about the aspects of the topic they were particularly interested in and how and with whom they were going to represent what they knew. The description shows the children's willingness to become actively involved with the planning of investigative work and collaboration.

As the project gathers momentum, the children can all become involved. The questions can provide a springboard for the work of the second phase. The first phase representations of experience remind the children of the variety of means of recording, which they can use in the second phase. The parents can offer access to field sites, personal expertise, or other support for the developing study. Even the topic web can continue throughout the life of the project to provide a location in the classroom where newly encountered technical terms can be recorded and related to earlier knowledge.

Phase 2: Fieldwork and Firsthand Investigation

By the end of the first phase, the teacher, the children, and the classroom environment can all be ready for the firsthand investigation of questions about the topic of study. In many cases, the teachers wrote about the field visits they had made with the children to field sites. The teachers had been prepared in the workshop and course to help the children take field notes on their visit. The best way seems to be to let children take a few sheets of blank paper and a pencil fastened to the clipboard. Several teachers expressed a little skepticism about the young children's ability to make good use of the clipboards. The teacher whose class did a project on birds wrote about her kindergarten children:

> I was even a little worried about letting them take clipboards to our first field trip to the Nature Center. I just knew that the clipboards were going to be a distraction; I didn't think they were going to be able to handle the responsibility. To my surprise, the children were so busy taking field notes I absolutely did not have any problems. I even had children who hated to write labeling their sketches.

The kindergarten teacher with the fire station project wrote:

> I found the clipboards to be a very strong motivator. I was short one or two, and when one little boy put his down to go to the restroom and returned, someone had left his paper, but taken his clipboard. He was heartbroken, so I called the office and borrowed enough for everyone.

Responsive Planning by the Teacher and Responsible Children Working

The work of the second phase of the project continues to involve responsive planning. Once the children return from the field, they can undertake further investigations or observations in the classroom if the topic allows for these activities. Otherwise, visiting experts can be invited to provide additional information. Books also become very important to children for doing independent research when they are old enough to read. Project work is found by many teachers to be so motivating to children that they will struggle and persist with difficult reading material in order to gain the information they seek. They are after all responsible for making their research findings available to their classmates for them to learn from. They are expected to teach what they learn, and their learning is additionally valued through this responsibility (Tracy & Glaser, 1999, p. 6). The teacher with the sandbox full of hermit crabs acquired all the books she could from the library for the kindergarten and first-grade children in her class. She wrote:

> We huddled in small groups poring over the books we collected from our school library to find out all the information we could about hermit crabs. As the children found new information, they came up and spoke their findings into the tape recorder and asked new questions that their research had prompted like, "What is a hermit anyway?" and returned to the books for more research and investigations. The children were excited in a more subdued manner than I was accustomed to them displaying. I believe that the use of the recorder and the books, some of which were filled with big and intimidating technical words, made the children feel like they were doing something important, something grown-up. Plus, they all realized the responsibility involved, as these were living creatures.

One of the Texas projects, with a sixth-grade class, began with unsuccessful lessons on fractions and became a stock market contest. This experienced teacher wrote:

> I had my students research and buy stocks accordingly. They listened to professionals come inside our classroom and give financial lectures. They proceeded to create PowerPoint presentations with graphs, reports, analyses, etc., to be shared with everyone. They were astounding! I have never seen better work. Several of their presentations were used by the students as entries in our local Multimedia Creativity contests. Most important, the kids could now easily tear apart a complex fraction in any way you wanted.

The following description of second-grade project work in full swing gives an impression of the energy and purpose shown by the children:

> The children chose things they were most interested in, and the research began! We visited the school library and the Internet looking for information. Some children worked independently; some chose to collaborate in a group. Others chose to work in parallel, exchanging ideas. The children completed their products and quickly moved on to learn more. Some of the children worked on more than one product, depending on their interests. The products of their work varied. Some chose constructions, posters, and dioramas, with written documentation.

This kind of work is difficult for teachers to plan for if they are not comfortable with divergent activities going on with multiple and developing outcomes. Sometimes these activities even emerge spontaneously from the children's growing sense of the potential of their work.

With younger children, it is easier to see this development when there are more adults to help the children as they work. The kindergarten teacher with the bird project wrote:

> We had many bird experts come and visit and even incubated baby chicks. As the weeks went on, I was just in awe with what the children were doing and learning. The neatest thing was that I had parents, grandparents, co-workers, and community members all involved in our bird project. I even had parents from my previous year helping out. I saw children's eyes light up and gleam with excitement every time we did anything with birds. I saw children do nothing but exceptional work on their research and representations.

The kindergarten/first-grade teacher with the crab project wrote:

> Some of the children spent considerable time drawing pictures of the crabs, while others studied the actions of the crabs themselves. Still others studied the books with unaccustomed intensity. Learning had become a joy that they actively pursued in their own ways. I, relegated to the post of observer and head research facilitator, watched the process by which they pursued gaining information and learning without my lead.

This teacher describes her role as one she was "relegated" to. In some ways, this description suggests that her role was now less important. Yet in my experience in this study and others, the new role she assumes, that of "observer and head research facilitator," requires just as much skill and strategy as her former directing role.

The new role was indeed challenging in many ways for the teachers, especially early on in the development of the projects. However, the concomitant rewards have been written about with conviction and a deep recognition of the value of the new ways of relating to children in the classroom. It appears that most teachers feel themselves energized and animated as they see the children's responses to the willingness of the adults to take children's ideas seriously, to value their experiences, and to help them develop their interests.

Phase 3: Concluding the Projects

In the third phase of the project, the work has to be brought to a close. A culminating event or opportunity for the children to formally share their findings and their achievements with their families was arranged in most of the classrooms. The teacher with the bird project describes arriving at the moment for concluding the work:

> As the weeks went by, the children continued to make representations and research birds. I had parents telling me they couldn't stop talking about birds at home. The children would go home and want to continue to make bird houses, nests, and write stories. After about eight weeks, I asked the children if they were ready to show what they had learned to their parents.

Conclusion

This paper has been particularly concerned with the process of developing projects with children from the teacher's point of view. More of the challenges seem to have been felt at the beginning of the projects, especially for teachers working this way for the first time. I remember one teacher, embarking on her fifth project, who told me that she always felt a certain heightened sense of anxiety in her anticipation of starting a new project. About three years later, when she told me she was beginning a new project with her kindergarten class, I asked her about her anxiety. She answered, "Oh no, I just look forward to seeing the children so focused on their work." She did not remember what she had said earlier about anxiety. She is a teacher who has been working this way consistently now for eight years and says she would not now teach without including projects in her planning.

I would like to finish with the words of teachers. At the end of their first and second projects, the teachers in the study wrote more powerfully about the rewards than about the challenges of doing project work. They mentioned their own satisfaction in the children's enjoyment of their work. They mentioned the children's willingness to work to high standards. They mentioned the amount of learning they saw taking place in all the different activities going on in the classroom. They mentioned their own growing interest in the topic of study as they learned from the experts alongside the children. For the teachers, these rewarding advantages of the Project Approach to teaching provided the energy and determination required to continue to learn how to develop and document successful projects:

> Project work is my favorite time of the day as well as the students'. They are able to work at their own pace and ability level. The children are happy and are learning in an environment that is based on what they want to learn and are enjoying. As I have seen how well the students progress doing project work, I am convinced that this form of teaching is very powerful and positively works with all children! (kindergarten teacher)

> I think I was the one who learned the most from the bird project. I learned to have faith in children. Children will learn, if we as teachers learn to let go and allow for their creativity and imagination to run like the wind. (kindergarten teacher)

> As I look back on this first project and as I learn more about the Project Approach, I realize I made many mistakes, but it was a beginning point for me. Our next project took off like a storm when a student brought a pet rat to school! This time I was prepared for the "wondering" that took place, and this time it was not my wondering but theirs. (kindergarten teacher)

> I have noticed other changed behavior. As we all progress on the path of learning together, I have noticed that even my rough and tumble little boys now hold my hand in front of their friends on the playground (a major breakthrough), and they are eager to bring up questions and ideas about our new and upcoming investigations. There is a new trust level and a new partnership that has taken place in our classroom. The children now see me, not just as a teacher, but also as a companion on a fantastic journey of learning. This is what I always imagined teaching should be. I have searched for years to achieve this symbiotic relationship with my learners. I don't think I could ever go back to my old style of teaching now. (kindergarten/first-grade teacher)

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Documentation as a Forum and Showcase in an Education Faculty

Anne Hunt, Pamela Nuttall Nason, & Pam Whitty

Abstract

In 1992, Lilian Katz spoke at the University of New Brunswick about Reggio Emilia and the Project Approach. Her ideas influenced our teacher educators' educational thought and practice and resulted in the establishment of a program that encouraged the expression of knowledge and skills through the arts. This paper tells about the establishment of a community of learners, including children, teachers, parents, and teacher educators, who worked together using the Project Approach. The work represents a deliberate effort to bring children into the University of New Brunswick Faculty of Education in the context of a teacher education program to cultivate different sensibilities about teaching and learning among preservice teachers. Three projects form the basis of the discussion: (1) Masks and Disguises—Exploring, Creating, Interpreting Identity; (2) Flight—From Aerodynamics to Flights of Fancy; and (3) the Saint John River—Reclaiming and Representing Our Heritage. The work took place over the period of a year. The paper focuses on the way in which documentation evolved during that time.

This paper is the story of the establishment of a community of learners, including children, teachers, parents, and university students and professors, through the Project Approach. Many voices of authority emerged as the work we are presenting progressed. Although we claim authorship, we will strive to accurately represent the contributions of the other members of our community.

Background

Across the hall from the Early Childhood Centre in the Faculty of Education at the University of New Brunswick, there is a well-appointed classroom designed for young children. It has been a research and development site for over 20 years.

The classroom also provides practical experience for undergraduates in the Faculty of Education. Hands-on experience prior to placement in an internship gives substance to the theoretical and provides opportunities for observing, planning, and evaluating their own and young children's learning.

Our classroom was empty in the fall of 1999. We had just finished a two-year Health Canada[1] project that had filled the space with parents, preschoolers, and early intervention and family resource center staff. We were looking for a project that would contribute to our education students, the teaching profession, and the community surrounding the campus.

New Brunswick, like many other parts of North America, has experienced serious cutbacks to arts programs in the public school system. In order to continue to provide music, art, and movement, classroom teachers have been pressed to include these areas that were once covered by trained specialists. Often, little support is provided and teachers feel overwhelmed. They ask, "How can the arts be addressed in an integrated curriculum?" "I have no expertise. How will I teach music, art, movement?" We wondered how we might explore these questions with our preservice education students.

Fredericton has a scheduled professional development time for elementary school teachers each Wednesday afternoon. Children attend school in the morning and are dismissed at noon. A quick survey of Wednesday afternoon Children's Programs revealed that no one in the city was providing an "arts-based" program at this time. We asked ourselves how we might create a setting that offered this option.

Since Lilian Katz's 1992 visit to Fredericton, the powerful images from her slide presentation of the work at Reggio Emilia have influenced our work. We have been particularly focused on Katz's contention that "The major goal of education is to engage the mind of the learner, aesthetically, morally, and spiritually." Acknowledging that we are all learners, we set out to explore the possibilities of using the Project Approach to establish a program that encouraged the expression of knowledge and skills through the arts.

Getting Started

We were working under some constraints, both financial and political. The program needed to recover its costs. However, tuition ought to be comparable to existing programs in the city to attract a wide range of students. We were also aware that parents would need fairly specific information about what was happening in this "new" program to persuade them to enroll their children. This requirement, to a certain extent, would affect the "organic development" (Chard, 1992, p. 31) of the project. Ideally, topic selection should be done in conjunction with the children at the center. We, however, unabashedly chose topics that we thought would appeal to the children and that would "sell" the program.

We chose to do three 6-week projects. This schedule allowed for flexibility in case families did not want to remain involved for the entire academic year. Together we created a web of possible areas of exploration and collected a bibliography of resources, including university faculty and members of the local arts community. The topics we chose were (1) Masks and Disguises, (2) Flight, and (3) the Saint John River. Pamphlets with application forms were written and distributed, and our phone began to ring.

Working in concert, we each developed, through the documentation process, ways of displaying our learning and our perceptions of what others were learning. In the following sections, we each focus on our own learning as we became a part of this learning community.

Anne Hunt: In a Community of Children

I had attended the 100 Languages of Children display at the Montshire Museum in the summer of 1998. This powerful experience helped me to see the relationship between documentation and display. I stood for a very long time in front of the three self-portraits by Francesco, his words of reflection, and his teachers' questions and feedback in order to come to a better understanding of the importance of "the product of a child's efforts as representative of the child's current understanding of a concept or experience" (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1995, p. 224). The mounting of Francesco's work with his words and the words of the teacher allowed me, the observer, to understand what it was that Francesco learned through the reworking of his self-portrait.

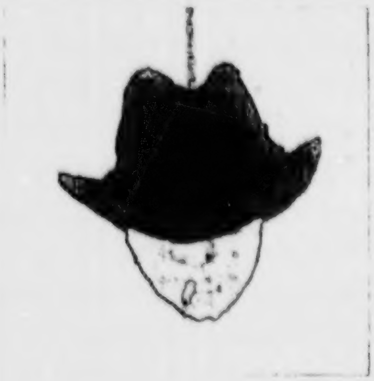
Then, just prior to the opening session of our first project on Masks and Disguises, I attended the Canadian Association of Young Children conference in Montreal (October 1999). A slide presentation by the University of Vermont preschool center addressed a problem I had been anticipating. I had been wondering about continuity for the children enrolled in our program. They would be coming only once each week, and I was concerned that they might become disengaged from their work during the interval between sessions. The University of Vermont slides demonstrated a strategy for helping children to reflect on, in their case, the previous day's activities. By photographing children at work and documenting what they said about that work, then putting this information up on a bulletin board, the children had a focal point for reflecting and continuing when they arrived at school the next day.

We decided to implement this approach as a bridge for the children from week to week. As the weeks unfolded and the project developed, the power of the display to attract people grew. I watched as the children used the display to reflect on their own learning and to learn about what other children were doing. Many different areas were being explored simultaneously in the program, and the bulletin board pulled this information together.

Parents used the display to see what was happening in this "new" after-school program. They were able to see what their child was doing in relation to the other people involved in the project. They were able to connect what was happening in the classroom with learning that was taking place at home. One mother brought in a set of sketches of different noses her daughter had done at home as she thought about creating a mask. These and other family photos were added to the display, and family stories were told.

University students and faculty used the display as an example of the investigative process. Here they could see how one learning adventure was progressing. They were able to see how specific curricular outcomes might be addressed through contextual, holistic learning.

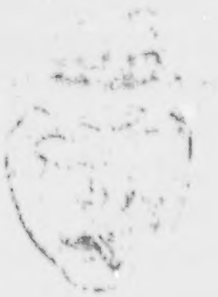
I was using the bulletin board to inform parents and the wider community, but I was also using it to shape what the children were learning. I realized that, as the person who selected what was posted, I was in a position of power and responsibility. What I chose to place on the board and where I chose to place it emphasized specific issues and imposed specific relationships.

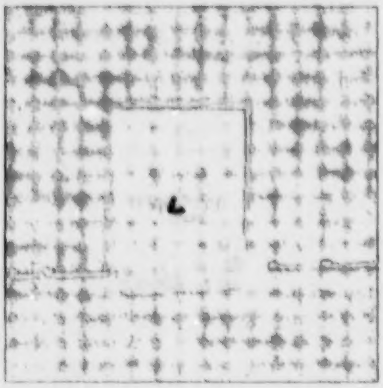


One particular connection was established when the children in the Masks and Disguises project went to see masks that had been created by art education students.

The education students learned from the "revisioning" of their work and continued to follow the progress of the project, volunteering to come and help on the busy and momentous day that the children created plaster masks formed on their own faces.

Our children sketched the masks and posted their sketches on the display.

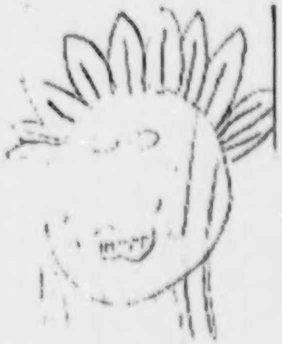


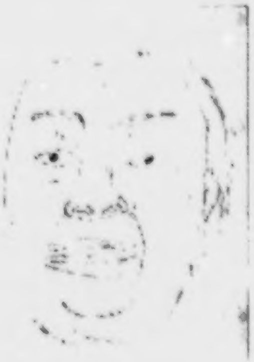


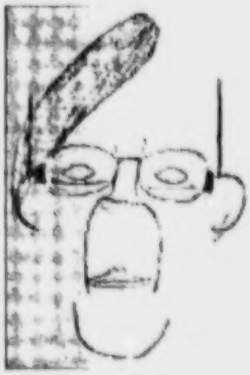
They later created paperbag masks that were a response to the education students' masks.

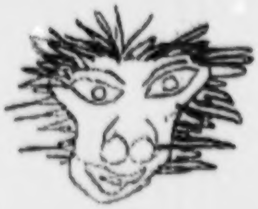
Part of the experience we created for the children was the opportunity to connect with the artistic community. We were fortunate to have two renowned mask creators in our area. Each of these artists had a focus, and their ideas soon emerged as the "big ideas" of our project. This emergence was not entirely coincidental. I recognize the power I exercised as the person responsible for documentation and display. George Fry is a mask maker who is concerned primarily with the transformation that takes place when one puts on a mask. George encouraged the children to think about the character they were creating for themselves as they fashioned their masks. He asked questions as the children worked. He showed sketches of the ideas that he worked through before the actual creation of the mask. And he spoke about the transformative power of the mask.

Ned Bear is a native North American mask maker who has carved many beautiful "larger than life" masks from the trees found in our forests. He is interested in the contemplative nature of the mask. Ned sees the power of the mask emerging as he works. One child asked how that felt. She said, "Do you have a complete idea before you start your mask or do you just begin carving?" Ned described the creative process as "like looking at the face from far away. I see it faintly and as I carve it seems to come closer and have more detail."









Gabrielle asked, "Do you have a complete idea before you start your mask, or does it grow while you are working?"

Ned said, "In the beginning, it is like I can see the mask way off in the distance. I see it faintly, and as I carve, it seems to come closer and have more detail."

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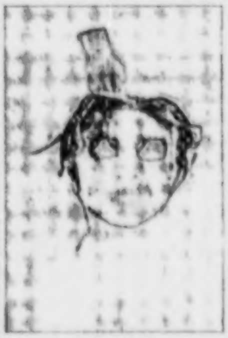
The children listened to these "big ideas" about contemplation and transformation. I ate them up. Here was "the beef" from my point of view. I used the display area to promote what I designated as the core of the program, an understanding of the role of the mask as an object to be contemplated or as something one puts on to become transformed into the character he or she has created. I used photos, the children's sketches, and quotes from specific interactions between children and artists to emphasize this powerful idea, and in doing so, I made the idea even more powerful.

Now the larger community could see, in passing our display, that there was some serious engagement happening. People began to stop by on a regular basis to see how the work was going. They, in turn, would become engaged in discussion, not so much about the work on display as the ideas behind the work. Process and products of this work are displayed for a much larger community on our Web site at *http://cspace.unb.ca/edfac/ecc/*.

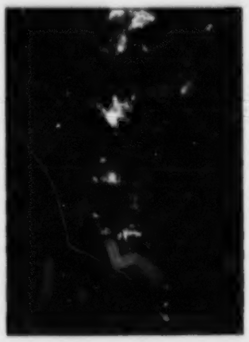
Pam Nason: In a Community of University Students

Six women and two men from my course "Problem Solving in the Early Years" worked with Anne on the Flight Project. In the early part of the term, they



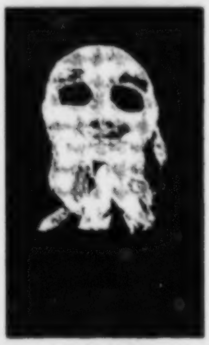
Camille

I am Ashley, sister to Camille. I live in a mansion in Florida. I swim all the time at the beach. I feel happy because I am having fun.



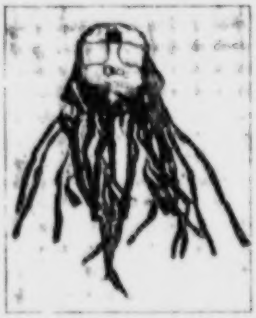
Sarah

I am Firetta, a Fire Goddess. I live in volcanoes in Hawaii. I protect kids from burning in house fires. I feel hot and happy. I save people from burning in fires.



Taryn

I am Sir Lancelot, a knight warrior. I live in a jungle in a little hut. I fight in wars. I fight dragons and evil people. I feel strong.



Nicolai

My name is Waterdam. I am a water god. I live in the ocean. I feel watery and wet. I run the waterfall.

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worked in three groups, to research different aspects of flight, but at the end of the project, they were collectively responsible for making the whole body of work visible in the Faculty of Education. To this end, they collected the children's work and words as well as their own professional planning, observations, and reflections, kept as "field notes."

Although I had never tried it with students before, I expected that they would find documentation to be a relatively easy task, having been, so I thought, well prepared. We had read *Engaging Children's Minds* (Katz & Chard, 1989), *The Project Approach* (Chard, 1992), and "The Rabbit Habitat—Documenting a Kindergarten Project" (Kocher, 1999); discussed the purposes of documentation; and seen how it was done in Reggio Emilia as portrayed in the film "The Amusement Park for Birds" (Forman & Gandini, 1994). Closer to home, we had seen how Anne used documentation on a weekly basis throughout the Mask Project and continued to do so in relation to the work on flight. For example, when Hilary and Emily drew a mallard with painstaking detail, Anne displayed their drawing alongside the stuffed bird on which they had modeled their representation.

Susan, a kindergarten teacher in my problem-solving course, had had this bird shipped down from her hometown as a resource for an emergent theme on bird flight. Displaying it in the hallway along with the children's work and Anne's captions had lured literally hundreds of people into a closer examination of the children's work and conversations about the process. Their interest had been a source of pride and pleasure, not only for the children but for Susan as well—another affirmation that it had been worth the trouble of getting her son to send the bird on a 200-km bus ride!

My students' own work had also been included in Anne's ongoing documentation. Prompted by slides of New Brunswick birds and Barbara Reid's wonderful plasticine illustrations in *Have You Seen Birds?* (Oppenheim & Reid, 1986), they had explored the subject matter and the media themselves to prepare for working with the children. Representing birds with plasticine had proved to be quite challenging for some of us, but the struggle—peppered with appeals for help, laughter, self-depreciation, support, and admiration—had helped to bond us. Displaying the work—everyone's work not just the ones that actually looked like birds—captured the children's interest and prompted a flurry of activity with the plasticine, which turned into a deep engagement for some children and produced stunning results. We began to see more clearly what Katz and Chard had meant by "engaging children's minds."

So, with models, lots of children's work and words, reflections on "critical incidents" and theoretical frames from problem solving, and the Project Approach at their disposal, I expected that all my students would need was a reminder to get started a week or two before the deadline for the documentation to be completed. It was not that easy. Their

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response to my "reminder" can probably best be characterized as panic. One student said she had "No idea how to do this." When I reminded them about their readings, they reminded me that not everyone had read all of the readings on documentation. Some of them had chosen, as I had allowed, readings that had interested them more. Someone asked, "What do you mean by documentation, anyway?" When I reminded them of the part about documentation in the video "The Amusement Park for Birds," they reminded me that they hadn't all been there for that class, and in any event, they hadn't been able to attend properly because they were worried about the massive snowstorm that had forced us to cancel class early. One young woman was in tears. Others were visibly uncomfortable or angry that I had not prepared them properly for this assignment. When I tried to reassure them that collectively they had the experience and knowledge to complete the documentation, someone wondered how the "boys" were to be involved. The two men in the course had spent comparatively little time with the children and missed a lot of classes, including this one—once again as I had allowed—to accommodate their particular circumstances.

I felt the fragile community of learners we had built over the few weeks of a university course beginning to dissolve into factions. It was clearly no longer "us," but them and me, and it looked as though a gender rift was developing. I was feeling trapped by my own flexible practice: trying to accommodate everyone's interests and particular circumstances seemed to have left the class with too little shared experience and knowledge in which to ground their collective plans for documentation. I needed to comfort the crying student and reestablish the class as a community in which everyone might claim agency and accountability, regardless of their individual differences. At the same time, I needed to make a positive and authoritative move to get on with the task at hand. The class met only once a week, and time was running out. And all of this midst my own feelings of failure at not having foreseen my students' needs more clearly from the beginning. I was also feeling not a little panic myself about what exactly I should do next.

Naming the problem as *our* problem, one which we *would* collectively solve, bought us a little thoughtful time to articulate that the problem with documentation was a problem with conceptualizing how we would organize the mountains of artifacts and information we had collected. What importance did we assign to it, and how would we convey that meaning to our audience?

I had envisioned that the documentation would show how my students' own developing professional knowledge, skills, dispositions, and feelings had interplayed with the children's. This was not to be. Now I can see that they were probably so immersed in their own professional struggles that stepping back

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to reflect on them was simply too much to ask at this point.

I proposed possible frames from Chard's work (1992), and we spent some time trying to categorize our recollections and reflections of the activity, the children's voices, and artifacts on a very large sheet of paper. All the time, I was aware that Whitney was not contributing. She was scribbling her own plan, which she presented to us when she was ready. Elegant and simple, Whitney's plan was collectively embraced. We could all imagine how it would look when it was finished: Starting point, the three themes that had emerged—flying machines, birds, and mythical creatures—and, bringing it all together, the mural the class had done as a whole to end the project.

The plan focused entirely on the children's work. The only concession I could see to my idea about the students documenting their own professional thought and practice was in an addendum to Whitney's plan. They would try to make explicit the connections between the children's work and the prescribed curriculum outcomes. Questions about these connections had been dogging them since the beginning of the course. How could teachers do such rich and innovative project work and still have time to meet all the required outcomes of schooling as articulated in the official Atlantic Provinces School curriculum documents? I had maintained that these outcomes did not have to be met lock-step, or even planned for. Reflecting on the work would enable us to see, and documentation would enable us to demonstrate, how these outcomes could be met through engaging work that had interdisciplinary integrity.

Getting the work organized and up on a large wall in the Faculty of Education according to Whitney's plan took place over a matter of days. It was the women who took the lead. Some of them were more deeply engaged than others, but all of them were involved. Artifacts and quotations were put up and taken down repeatedly—with not a little consternation, discussion, and, ultimately, satisfaction. I noticed that in the process the women involved seemed to have strengthened their ties. And the education faculty at large had been drawn in as they passed through—questioning, commenting, critiquing, stepping over the mountains of artifacts strewn in the hallway . . . But I was concerned that the two men were becoming marginalized. Only one of them had been there to help put the display up, but with his young son in his arms, his actual involvement had been limited. The other man was working on his practicum and found it difficult to participate in the process during the times that were convenient to the rest of the group.

By the time the documentation was up in the hall, I could see that these men had contributed relatively little. I could also see that although the women had dedicated endless hours to the documentation, the curricular connections were still weak. This weakness proved to be just the space the men needed to insert their contribution to the project. They agreed to work at superimposing the Atlantic curriculum outcomes on the work that was already displayed. In fact, they never actually did superimpose the outcomes—feeling that the display would have become too cluttered and incomprehensible to the audience. But they did comb carefully through a massive pile of curriculum documents, and they did demonstrate to the class, quite meticulously, how the various aspects of the work did indeed meet many of the Atlantic curriculum outcomes.

Their presentation went on for much longer than planned, but none of the other students wanted them to end prematurely. I concurred, intuitively recognizing that it was important for them to demonstrate the full extent of their effort and contribution. Thus, they were able to restore their place in our classroom community and affirm it as a community in which equal distribution of workload is not confounded with uniformity. As well, they had clearly paid very careful attention to the work that the women had documented—gratifying in itself—and as they produced example after example of the way in which the official curriculum outcomes had been achieved, we were collectively affirmed as a community of professionals who can teach with coherence and integrity, be responsive to our students' individual and group interests and needs, yet still meet the bureaucratic demand for common, predetermined outcomes. It was on this high note that my involvement with this project ended, but two of my students were in Pam Whitty's class, so it was not the end for them.

Pam Whitty: Reclaiming Our Places in the Greater Community

This project in both the children's and adults' learning environment was constructed, in part, to offer teacher candidates in the class Cultural Constructions of Childhood an opportunity to work directly with the children and their teacher, Anne, in the UNB Wednesday Arts program. In the mid-nineties, our university shifted from a four-year BEd to a consecutive or concurrent education requirement for graduation and licensing. Consequently, both our practicum opportunities and the early childhood concentration within our faculty have been seriously diminished for incoming teachers. This educational reality combined with the loss of funding for a teacher in our early years classroom has left us scrambling to keep the children's space occupied in an educationally and financially viable manner. The point I am making is that our Project Approach had certain constraints placed upon it from the outset. Anne and I had determined this particular topic, in a broad way, to appeal to children and families throughout the city who might have both the disposition and finances to take part in an after-school arts program. Our other constraint, if you will, is that the topic needed to fit within the framework of Cultural Constructions of Childhood. We "advertised" this topic in our brochure "The Saint John River." This program will reclaim and represent our natural and historical heritage:

- Through archived photos, drawings, paintings, and maps, we will examine the settlements along the river in the past.
- Through story, song, and dance, we will explore the importance of the river to various cultures who have lived on its banks.
- We will learn how people and especially children have worked and played on the river.
- We will develop awareness of wildlife in, on, and along the banks of our river.

It was an ambitious plan.

The history of the British in Fredericton has received significant recognition over the past two centuries, and in many ways, this Anglican Protestant Loyalist story has become the history of the city. After the American revolutionary war of 1776, several thousand subjects "loyal" to the British crown made their way to Atlantic Canada. Many were given land grants in recognition of their allegiance to the Crown. Today, local tourist attractions continue to emphasize this part of our history. Everyday throughout the summer, tourists and locals alike bear witness to the centuries-old ritual of the "redcoats" changing the guard at the Officers Barracks in the downtown military compound. More recently, and in particular with the restoration and renovation of Old Government House, a Georgian structure created by and for the British ruling class in 1826, there has been a growing recognition that there is more than one history to be told within the city of Fredericton. Anne and I wanted to begin to reclaim a few of these histories in the larger community context and within the children's program and my cultural constructions course. Thus, the community of learning expanded one more time.

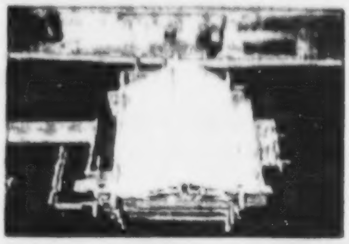
The broad aim of the cultural constructions course, which I have been teaching/learning within over the past 10 years, is to examine various ideas of what it means to be a child and how these ideas work in the lived experience of children. The process is one of both designated and emergent curriculum. The questions that permeate the course readings, discussion, and activities are "What does it mean to be a child?" and "What social, economic, political, and/or personal conditions contribute to the cultural conditions of the lives of children and their families?"

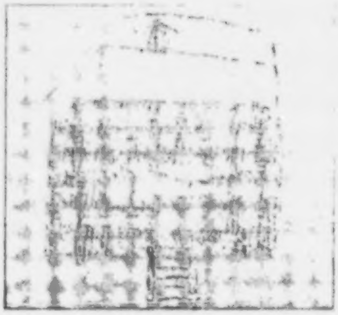
We began in the first half of the course by examining our inherent and lived ideas of childhood as well as the perspectives of various cultural and feminist theorists and cultural text. Examples of cultural texts included *Naomi's Road* (Kogawa, 1993), a fictionalized autobiography about life as experienced by a young Japanese-Canadian girl and her family in a Canadian internment camp during WW II and *Out of the Depths* (Knockwood, 1992), a series of autobiographical accounts of life in a residential native school in the mid 1950s and 1960s. Thus by the time we began this joint project with Anne, the idea of a singular notion of either childhood and history had been disrupted.

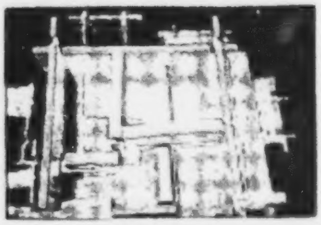
We worked with Anne and the children in the UNB Wednesday Arts programs through direct participation with the children in the program or by acting as resource support to the teacher. We formed conversational clusters in which various roles were selected by each person. In this way, we participated in the children's program directly, located resource materials, or assisted with documentation. Anne and I decided to take as our overlapping starting point a reading of *My Place* by Nadia Wheatley and Donna Rawlins (1994). *My Place* is an Australian picture book that begins with a child's brief telling of an episode from the life of a piece of land in 1988. We thought it important to start in the present with the children and work back in time. The text and illustrations go back in Australian history to the time prior to 1788, when the aborginals were the only people on the land. The power of this text is the manner in which it evokes multiple histories, demonstrating that everyone has a story to tell and that every place has many stories. The visible constants on the land are natural heritage—the rising and the setting of the sun, a tree, and a river.

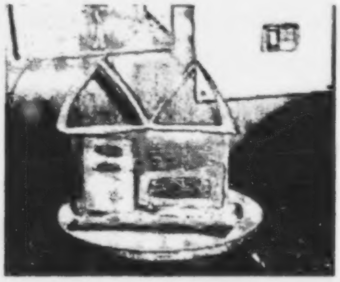
When I read this book in our cultural constructions class, I asked, "What does *My Place* evoke for you?" This question is one of the same questions Anne had asked the group of children. The verbal responses and visual mappings that my question elicited ranged from "my room is my place for now as I am from out of town" to "my place in the world" to explicit connections with the text and illustrations and the stories being told therein.

The next part of our first session was a problem-solving challenge. What ideas do you have for linking the place of the Saint John River to the histories of Fredericton? How do we include the (to us) lesser known histories of the Acadians and the Wolustoktiuk peoples? And then how do we fit these learning interests you have identified with the children's program and its educational goals? Again there were









Here are houses constructed by the children in response to Anne's question about their place.

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numerous responses, and I will say that I was fortunate to have nine people registered in this class. This small number allowed for multiple conversations, clarifications, and explorations.

Three women had ideas immediately. Bev, a potter and mother of three living along the Saint John River below Fredericton, said she would look at native histories in the area. Specifically, she looked at how First Nations peoples were represented in "our" history books. We are living on contested ground was one of the first comments she made as we began this discussion. Debbie, a child care provider and mother, wanted to interview her grandfather who lived above Fredericton and hear his stories about the river prior to the building of the Mactaquac hydroelectric plant and dam in 1968. In particular, she wanted to learn about the effect of the dam upon the lives of the people living there. Zoe, a farmer and a breeder of the Canadian horse, wanted to represent her own land. She and her husband own a large farm. She began to envision how she might represent her farm in a manner similar to that communicated in *My Place* and trace that link to the Saint John River and early days of white settlement on the tributary of the river that ran through her farm.

Kim and Mary decided to look at Acadian history. Mary was taking a degree in history and was comfortable in that field. Kim was from out of the province, had a keen interest in social studies, and was interested in learning more about the Acadians. Two other students, Emily and Susan, were working with Anne and the children in the project that Pam described earlier in this paper. They provided thoughtful and compassionate bridging to our class from this earlier project. In addition, both had extensive prior experience working and being with children. Karen and Namal, new to the Project Approach and the Reggio conception of representation, and both mothers, assisted in the children's room with ongoing activities and in our classroom with discussions about the emerging projects and the overall challenge of how we would document process and learnings.

Reflections

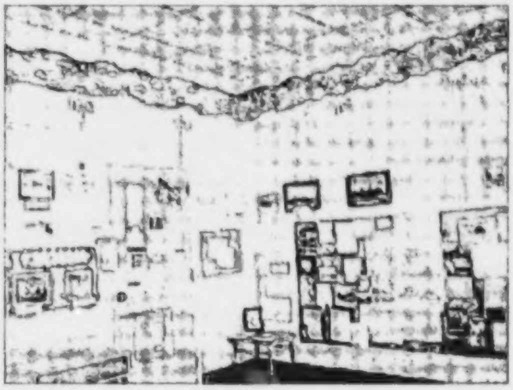
In writing about this process, I am struck by the way in which our classroom community brought together people who were located in a variety of communities. Three women immediately connected with the content and articulated an idea--they were able to initiate and carry out their own project within the broader visions Anne and I had articulated. They were part of the local community. Two women who had been in Pam's class knew the children, knew Anne, and knew the process, so they were able to be peer links, if you will, in the collaborative process of reflecting upon learnings and discussing the process of documentation. They were part of the early childhood educational community in the faculty. Two undergraduate women with an interest in a particular content area jumped in, found out there was little in English on the Acadians, recognized the limitations of materials available with which to learn from themselves and teach to others. They were able to engage the children in a play about the expulsion of the Acadians, which the children reenacted, rewrote, and presented to their parents—with just one week left in the program. They also brought in an archival map borrowed from the Provincial Archives that reiterated on the map itself how the river and its tributaries came to be known to the Acadians and the British through native knowledge. Although they did not capitalize on this fact in the context of this particular class, Kim subsequently returned to the map in her social studies class as a direct result of this work—a way of reclaiming the native voice through the available records. Two more women, both mothers, gave a great deal of thought to what representation meant in relation to their own children, 4 and 5 years of age. In their self-reflections, they were very clear about their own learning about the importance of multiple forms of representation, how children might better use one form than another, and how one form informs or elaborates another.

Zoe's work provided examples of how "Her Place" paralleled aspects of *My Place*. She created her presentation as a joint effort with two girls who clean her barn in exchange for riding lessons. The girls arrived in riding outfits to enhance their presentation to Anne's class. We all gained a sense of the communities Zoe was combining, as a horsewoman, farmer, and participant in our classes.

As a class, we decided to document our work using the Saint John River as a time line. This decision came about as a graphic way to address the emerging evidence demonstrating the absence of native histories from the more readily available histories, as well as the apparent scarcity of Acadian history and artifacts. On the other hand, we were surrounded by British artifacts in terms of actual teaching/learning resources and local architecture that documented the British presence since the arrival of the Loyalists in 1776.

We began the river time line one morning with whomever from the class was available. Two of the moms brought their children, which added to the community spirit (we had heard about these children in class). We all pitched in, painting the river in various shades of blue on paper and on the windows. We began in one corner and took up over half the room with native-related stories, drawings, paintings, and plasticine representation. Then we entered into the representations of Acadian work by all Anne's children and the two students in my class—including the Acadian arrival and their expulsions in 1755 by the British. It was not until the British arrived in the late 1700s that this dual history of "our place" became multiple.

11,000 years ago



The visual representation of the river as a time line clearly demonstrated how one cultural community had been supplanted by another and, in the case of the British arrival, how they were refugees themselves seeking political asylum. We could also see how the histories blended and how one racial group was treated differently than another in the 1960s. For example, when Debbie interviewed her grandfather about the flooding of the village of Jewett's Mills to make way for the Mactaquac hydroelectric power plant, she learned that the native burial grounds on the Snowshoe Islands were simply flooded, while the English cemetery was moved to a new burial site above the dam. We were able to make a link between the photographs she brought in of the Snowshoe Islands and one of the native stories that Bev located. Seeing this connection so graphically illustrated on our river time line prompted new questions about who is included in our official histories and who isn't. And if not, what does this exclusion mean—and how does a teacher identify and correct for omissions of cultural groups in the curricula?

Conclusion

In his book *Children Closely Observed,* Armstrong (1980) uses one child's work to demonstrate how the practice of art and the growth of understanding are inextricably interwoven: the very act of trying to make visible what one knows is what prompts the search for deeper understanding, which in turn prompts renewed efforts to represent that knowledge. The process is ongoing. We offer this paper in that spirit. As we have practiced the art of documentation with/in our Faculty of Education, we have begun to

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see new possibilities for understanding, reclaiming, and building community in the context of our teacher education program. We need now to practice some more.

Acknowledgments

The following children participated in the Wednesday Afternoon Arts Program: Nicolai, Sarah, Alex, Christopher, Elliott, Jonah, Camille, Devin, Emily, Hilary, Gabrielle L., Bess, Stephanie, Sebastian, Gabrielle M., Holly, Taryn, Caitlin, Jaime, Michael, Tyler, Adam, Thomas, Megan, Sarah, David, Michael. We strive to honor their work in this paper.

Notes

[1] Publications developed from Parenting for a Literate Community project, Health Canada grant:
Parenting for a Literate Community: A Training Program for Family Resource and Early Intervention Personnel, Pam Nason, Anne Hunt, Pam Whitty, and Lynda Homer, 1999.

Publications born from this project are:

Training Manual/Getting Started Pamphlet, Pamela Nuttall Nason and Lynda Homer

Books for Babies, Lynda Homer

Singing & Dancing, Anne Hunt

Anticipating Text Predictable Books, Anne Hunt and Pamela Nuttall Nason

Honoring Domestic Literacies, Pamela Nuttall Nason and Anne Hunt

Folk & Fairytales, Pamela Nuttall Nason and Anne Hunt

Cultivating Language & Literate Play, Pamela Nuttall Nason and Anne Hunt

Where Does Fonix Phit?, Pamela Nuttall Nason and Anne Hunt

Connecting: Home, School & Community-based Programs, Pamela Whitty with Mollie Fry

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Designing Curriculum for the Early Years

How Curriculum Frameworks Respond to Developmental Stages: Birth through Age 8

Diane Trister Dodge & Toni S. Bickart

Abstract

An early childhood curriculum should offer educators a vision of what an age-appropriate program looks like and a framework for making decisions about how to achieve that vision. This paper describes three frameworks that acknowledge the different needs and abilities of infants and toddlers, preschool and kindergarten children, and children in grades one through three. Infants and toddlers are at the stage of establishing trust and autonomy. Because these issues are addressed in the context of relationships, the paper emphasizes relationships as the focus of decision making. Three- to 5-year-olds are at the stage of initiative. They like to have choices, to come up with ideas for using materials and for play. Thus, an environmental approach is used, and five components—philosophy, goals and objectives, the physical environment, the teacher's role, and the parent's role—are defined and applied to the physical environment as the setting for learning. Six- to 8-year-olds are at the stage of industry. They are increasingly product oriented, want to do a job well, and want to feel competent as learners. The framework described in this paper has six strategies: (1) knowing the children, (2) creating a classroom community, (3) establishing a structure, (4) guiding children's learning, (5) assessing children's learning, and (6) building a partnership with families.

There is now more research on how people learn and specifically on how young children learn than we have ever had before. This research has led to widespread debates in both the general public and media as well as the profession about curriculum and pedagogy. Frequently missing from the debate, however, is an understanding of how teachers make decisions in the classroom.

High-quality programs are planned and implemented by people who are skilled and knowledgeable about young children and how they learn. But even the best trained professionals find it beneficial and appropriate to teach in early childhood programs that use a curriculum as a focus for learning. An early childhood curriculum offers educators a vision of what an age-appropriate program looks like and a framework for making decisions about how to achieve that vision.

Curriculum in early childhood is defined as "an organized framework" that includes three components (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992, p. 10):

- Content—This component is the subject matter of the curriculum, the goals and objectives for children's learning.
- Processes—This component is the pedagogy of learning, how teachers teach, and the ways in which children achieve the goals and objectives of the curriculum.
- Context—This component is the setting, the environment in which learning takes place.

Each of these components, to be implemented well, requires a knowledge of how children develop and learn at each stage of development; their individual strengths, interests, and needs; and the social and cultural contexts in which they live (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 9). These dimensions of learning, known as developmentally appropriate practice, guide all aspects of teaching and learning. When teachers understand developmentally appropriate practice, they can use this information to guide children's learning.

At each stage of development, there are issues of central importance to the healthy growth of children. Therefore, we have created three frameworks to acknowledge the different needs and abilities of infants and toddlers, preschool and kindergarten children, and children in grades one through three. We base our curriculum frameworks on Erik Erikson's stages of socioemotional development (Erikson, 1963).

Infants and toddlers are at Erikson's stage of establishing *trust* and *autonomy*. Because these issues are addressed in the context of relationships, we emphasize the relationships caregivers/teachers have with children as the focus of decision making.

Three- to 5-year-olds are at the stage of *initiative*. They like to have choices, to come up with ideas for using materials and for play. Thus, we use an environmental approach and design each interest area as a laboratory for exploring, trying out and sharing ideas, and creating representations.

Six- to 8-year-olds are at the stage of *industry*. They are increasingly product oriented, want to do a job well, and want to feel competent as learners. In a structured community of learners, teachers can give children opportunities to investigate, represent, and reflect on what they are learning.

Strategies for teaching grow from learning principles moderated by this information about stages of development. Purposeful teaching and learning occur when this knowledge is put into practice through curriculum.

A Curriculum Framework for Infants and Toddlers

The first three years of life are critical to a child's healthy development. Research indicates that more rapid brain development takes place during these years than at any other time of life. During this period, children are discovering who they are, how others respond to them, and in what ways they are increasingly competent. They are also learning how to relate to others, what it means to express their feelings, and whether they are loved. Their brains are being "wired" into patterns for emotional, social, physical, and cognitive development.

For infants and toddlers, development occurs in all of these areas as they use their senses to gain a sense of security and identity and to explore the people and objects in their world. Too often, curriculum guides for infant/toddler programs emphasize intellectual stimulation above other critical areas of development. The availability of books promising to build superior minds are plentiful, as are toys designed to teach lessons and skills to even the youngest infant. But what is important in meeting the developmental needs of infants and toddlers can be found in the responsive relationships children build with the important adults in their lives.

An appropriate curriculum for infants and toddlers focuses on what is most essential for their healthy growth and development: a caregiver/teacher who builds responsive relationships with children and families. The curriculum should provide the big picture of what high-quality programs look like and should provide a framework for making decisions based on knowledge of child development, observations of children, and thoughtful reflection. It should define where to lead each child and family and provide a guide as to how to get there.

The Creative Curriculum for Infants & Toddlers (Dombro, Colker, & Dodge, 1997) is one example of an appropriate curriculum for very young children. Like all formal curriculum models, it outlines what children learn during the first three years, the experiences through which children achieve these learning goals, what staff and parents do to help children reach these goals, and the materials and setting needed to support implementation. Figure 1 shows what the curriculum looks like graphically. The triangle within a circle emphasizes the importance of building responsive relationships among caregivers/teachers, children, families, and the community in the context of daily routines and activities.

Caregivers/Teachers

Caregivers/teachers are the foundation of the curriculum, and the framework empowers them as decision makers. Inside the triangle are all the steps involved in creating and maintaining a high-quality program. The caregiver/teacher creates a warm, inviting environment, ensures that children are safe, and follows practices that promote children's physical and mental health and learning. Children receive positive guidance about behavior. Planning and evaluation are

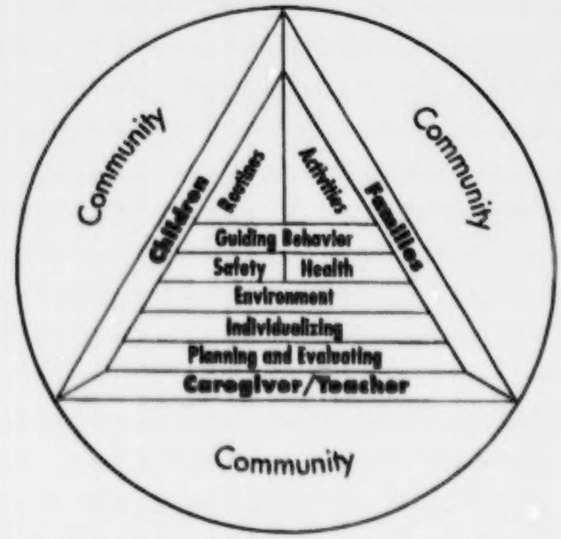

Figure 1. A curriculum framework for infants and toddlers.

ongoing. The program is individualized based on what is learned about each child and family through observations and daily interactions.

Daily Routines

Much of the teacher's day revolves around the five routines of (1) hellos and good-byes, (2) diapering and toileting, (3) eating and mealtimes, (4) sleeping and naptime, and (5) getting children dressed. Each of these routines is used as an opportunity to build relationships with children and promote learning. For infants and toddlers, it is during these routines that learning takes place and they begin to show trust in the world.

Activities

Caregivers/teachers consider the stages, abilities, and interests of the children in their care and, taking their lead, plan appropriate activities and experiences. They arrange opportunities for children to imitate and pretend, play with toys, dabble in art, enjoy stories and books, taste and prepare food, explore sand and water, have fun with music and movement, and go outdoors. As children grow and expand their interests and gain greater ability to interact with their environment, activities become increasingly important as the focus of learning.

While this picture provides a visual framework, the curriculum itself provides a guide for decision making each day. It offers practical information about an appropriate environment for young infants, mobile infants, and toddlers—one filled with materials and experiences that will interest them. Infants and toddlers who feel safe and secure in their relationships with adults are eager to reach out and explore their world. Observing how each child responds to and uses the environment, teachers ask questions such as:

- What interests this child? How can I nurture her curiosity?
- What skills is she working on? What materials and experiences might I make available or offer her?
- How does he typically approach the world? What is his personal style or temperament?
- What can I do to encourage his engagement?
- How does she respond to different sensory experiences? What can I do to protect her from over- or understimulation?
- How many books should I leave out for my toddlers to look at?
- Should I hand the teething ring to the baby or let her reach for it?

Having a curriculum framework gives teachers a way to follow each child's lead and make good decisions.

A Curriculum Framework for Preschool and Kindergarten

During the early childhood years, children are learning to trust others outside of their families, to gain independence and self-control, and to take initiative and assert themselves in socially acceptable ways. At the same time, they are learning about their world by observing their surroundings and finding out what happens when they interact with materials and other people. Their language skills grow enormously. They develop the ability to talk about their observations and experiences as they explore their immediate surroundings. Their environment becomes larger and richer as they learn to understand others and express their ideas more effectively. While they are working

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on these social, emotional, and cognitive skills, they are making great strides physically—running, skipping, jumping, hopping, climbing—and developing their fine motor skills as well.

These growing abilities enable children to make friends, work with others, and communicate with children and adults. We say they are at the stage of *initiative* because they are ready to reach out to others as they explore their world. Social and emotional competence is a key developmental goal for this age. Research confirms that "social and emotional school readiness is critical to a successful kindergarten transition, early school success, and even later accomplishments in the workplace" (Peth-Pierce, 2000, p. vii). The National Education Goals Panel (1999) describes these key social skills as "respecting the rights of others, relating to peers without being too submissive or overbearing, being willing to give and receive support, and treating others as one would like to be treated" (Peth-Pierce, 2000, p. 1).

An appropriate curriculum for preschool and kindergarten children therefore provides a way to build social and emotional competence at the same time as children learn important concepts, information, and skills (Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2000, p. 8). Traditional curriculum resources for preschool programs too often focus on "busy-work" activities, offering pre-packaged lessons, a different theme each week, and ditto sheets. In addition to promoting inappropriate practices, these resources take the focus away from the child.

Rather than simply listing activities, games, or songs for teaching, an appropriate curriculum addresses children's need to demonstrate initiative and focuses on creating an environment where children can interact, explore, and make choices. The richer and more interesting the environment, the more opportunities there are for children to learn. The teacher watches how children are using the materials and listens to what they are saying in order to understand how they are thinking. Then the teacher supports children's learning by adding new materials, asking open-ended questions, or teaching a particular skill that will help them explore further.

The Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood (Dodge & Colker, 1992) is a curriculum framework for preschool and kindergarten children that builds on what we know about how children learn and the particular developmental needs of this age group. There is clear direction for teachers about setting up the environment and guiding children's learning.

The framework has five components: (1) How Children Learn, (2) What Children Learn, (3) The Physical Environment, (4) The Teacher's Role, and (5) The Parent's Role (see Figure 2). Whereas the foundation for an infant/toddler curriculum is in the relationship that the caregiver/teacher builds with children and families, the organizing principle for preschool and kindergarten curriculum is the physical environment of the program. In the center of the graphic are interest areas that organize the environment for children. But before these interest areas can be arenas for important learning, various elements are essential to support a framework for decision making.

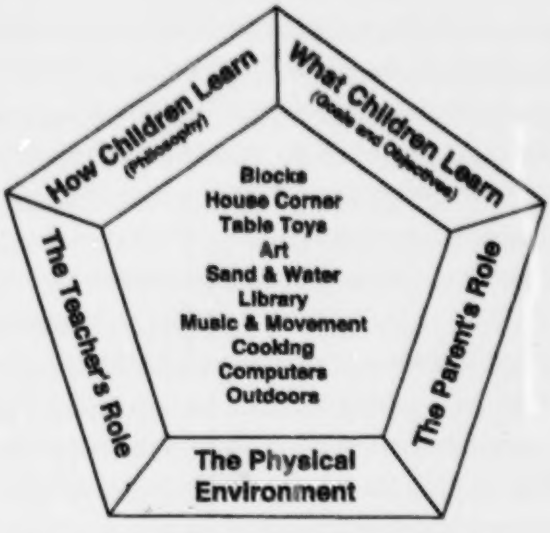

Figure 2. A curriculum framework for preschool and kindergarten.

How Children Learn

A clear philosophy about how children learn requires an understanding of developmentally appropriate practice and new understandings of appropriate pedagogy. Curriculum should be based on knowing the normal sequences of growth typical of 3- to 5-year-old children in all areas of development. As

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active, social individuals, they have lots of ideas they want to try out and share.

While children connect new information to their existing understandings, current research is expanding our interpretations of when and how children begin to be able to go from concrete to abstract learning (Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2000, p. 4). Teachers can expose children to decontextualized language that is more complex and abstract when they get them to think about something beyond the here and now (Neuman, Copple, & Bredekamp, 2000). For example, children building bridges in the block area might be asked to recall and talk about their recent visit to a drawbridge, describing what they remember seeing. Getting to know children as individuals with unique strengths, interests, and talents, as well as responding to the social and cultural context in which they have been raised, enables teachers to know when and how to expose children to new learning opportunities and build their competence.

What Children Learn

The goals and objectives for learning are the road map of an early childhood curriculum. They provide the direction for planning the program and a way to determine what children know and how they are developing. This information enables teachers to respond to each child individually, to build on strengths and focus on skills that need strengthening. A high-quality curriculum focuses on all aspects of development and links these with the content knowledge and skills appropriate for this age group.

Specific social/emotional goals include developing a sense of self, responsibility for self and others, and prosocial behavior. In the area of physical development, there are goals in both gross and fine motor skills. Cognitive development includes learning and problem solving, logical thinking, and representation and symbolic thinking. At this age, language development becomes particularly important to support and enhance. Listening and speaking and reading and writing goals are articulated with specific objectives that children are expected to master. What children learn in preschool and kindergarten has a direct link to the content and skills learned in later grades. Therefore, it should be intellectually stimulating and worthy of children's time.

The Physical Environment

As the "textbook" for the curriculum, the physical environment is the vehicle through which children learn. The curriculum's guidance enables teachers to make decisions about indoor room arrangement and outdoor spaces, what materials and equipment are appropriate, and how they should be grouped and displayed.

The Teacher's Role

An appropriate physical environment structures the educator's role in promoting children's development and learning. But it is not enough to set up attractive, well-organized, and rich interest areas. Teachers must know how to select and arrange materials and how to interact with children so that they acquire the knowledge and skills to become successful learners. They need a good understanding of what materials will interest and challenge children and the skills to observe how each child uses the environment in order to plan for individual growth and learning. A knowledge of the continuum of skill development is essential in order to challenge children so that they are always progressing. Learning how to support children in making choices, what to say to help them clarify their understanding, and how and when to ask open-ended questions—"What do you think will happen if...?" "How many different ways can you...?" "Why do you think that happened?"—are all important aspects of the preschool and kindergarten teacher's role.

The Parent's Role

The most effective early childhood programs are those that involve children's families in meaningful ways. This is why the last component of curriculum addresses the role of parents. Although a teacher's primary role is to work with children, the needs of the child are always best met when parents are also actively involved and an integral part of the program. A partnership begins with mutual respect and trust. Staff who convey the message that parents are welcome and encouraged to visit the program set the tone for a positive relationship. Participating in the program enables parents to observe firsthand how their children are progressing so they can support and extend their learning at home. When teachers take time to learn about the child and family, they can often develop ways to extend the learning at home. Teachers who explain developmentally appropriate practice to parents, acknowledge their concerns about their children, and build confidence and pride in what their children can accomplish gain valuable allies in the effort to support high-quality preschool and kindergarten programs.

Interest Areas

With this framework in place, the interest areas of the classroom become the laboratory for children to investigate, reconstruct, and share what they are learning. As children work with blocks, engage in dramatic play, manipulate sand and water, use table toys, explore the library, participate in music and movement activities, explore art materials, cook, use computers, and play outdoors, they learn concepts and skills in literacy, math, science, social studies, the arts, and technology.

Using *The Creative Curriculum* framework helps teachers answer questions such as the following:

- Does the room arrangement support positive behavior?
- How can I help children to use materials more carefully and clean up?
- Are children learning through their play?
- How can we make transitions occur more smoothly?
- Is this a good time to introduce new props, learning materials, books, or toys?
- How can I encourage children to do more writing?
- What would be a good topic for our next study?

What to teach and how to teach it become part of a unified whole with a curriculum framework that enables teachers to see the big picture at the same time as they address individual needs of children.

A Curriculum Framework for First, Second, and Third Grades

The foundation for good teaching is knowing about children. Six- to 8-year-olds have their own particular characteristics. They are defining who they are based on certain simple attributes or achievements, such as: "I wear glasses." "I'm good at soccer." "I can read books with chapters." Many think about how they look in the eyes of others and become increasingly self-conscious. Establishing friendships is very important, although they sometimes lack the skills to do so successfully. A delightful characteristic of this age is the emergence of a sense of humor, and telling jokes is a popular pastime. Children this age also become less dependent on adults and more dependent on peers. As this change occurs, children may begin to question authority and test limits.

While there are predictable patterns of development, it becomes very obvious at this age that children do not grow and develop at the same rate. Some may be more or less coordinated; one child may be extremely verbal with a large vocabulary, while another says little. In addition, an individual child's development does not follow an even course across all areas: a 6-year-old may have the fine motor skills of some 7-year-olds but the language skills of some 5-year-olds.

Erikson describes this stage in terms of a positive and negative attribute. The positive attribute, *industry*, means children want to take on tasks and have something to show for their efforts. They know when they have done a job well and do not need empty praise. Competent children are sure enough of themselves to take risks and to struggle with challenges in order to reach a goal, solve a problem, or complete a task. When children do not achieve a positive sense of industry, they feel inferior ("I can't do it."). Erikson's theories explain how important it is for teachers to provide children with appropriate challenges so they can feel successful.

Because expectations for what primary grade children need to know and do have greatly expanded in the past decade, instructional planning for this age group must consider how to set up knowledge-centered environments where children are actively engaged in the learning process (Donovan, Bransford, & Pellegrino, 1999). In such environments, teachers consider what children already know about a given subject and how to help them to construct new understandings based on that knowledge. They provide feedback to children throughout the learning process, trying to guide children to make sense of new information, not just to memorize it.

Building the Primary Classroom (Bickart, Jablon, & Dodge, 1999) is built around six strategies that provide teachers with a framework for making decisions about their work with children at this stage of development. As you can see in Figure 3, at the center are the content areas of instruction—Language and Literacy, Mathematical Thinking, Social Studies, Scientific Thinking, Technology, and the Arts. Surrounding these content areas are the strategies that teachers implement so they can effectively teach content and give children opportunities to demonstrate industry using the skills they are learning.

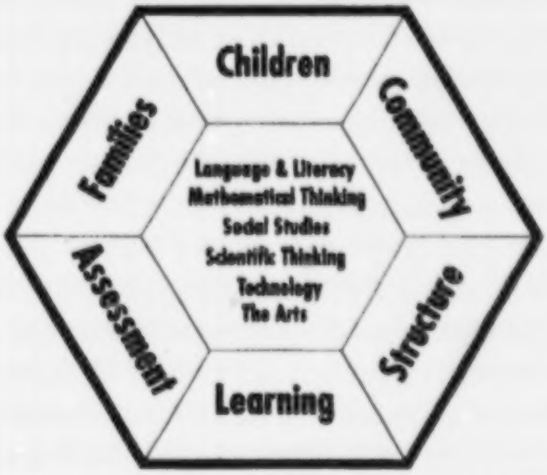

Figure 3. A curriculum framework for the primary grades.

Knowing the Children

This strategy means understanding developmental stages, individual characteristics, and the influence of culture. Because every group is unique, teaching and learning are dynamic processes shaped in part by the attributes and interests of each group of children. Teachers use what they have learned about the children they teach to make decisions about what to teach when and how to teach it.

Building a Classroom Community

This strategy is key to creating an environment where children can explore and be productive. When a classroom functions as a community, children experience a sense of belonging and a sense of empowerment that are essential to their well-being and their academic success. Teachers build a community through having varied kinds of meetings or full-class gatherings during the day:

- meetings to start the day together;
- meetings for group discussions—about classroom life (rules, jobs), about a problem or issue and coming up with a solution;
- meetings to introduce a lesson or material or to discuss what has been learned;
- meetings at transition times to be a bridge between one activity and another; and
- end-of-day meetings to help children make a transition from the classroom community to another community.

Teachers also build community by helping children learn to work collaboratively and teaching children social problem-solving skills.

Establishing a Structure for the Classroom

An explicit structure enables teachers to facilitate children's learning and helps children to become self-directed learners. The kind of structure teachers create depends upon the kind of learners they want children to become. In a collaborative community where children are encouraged to become self-directed learners, all members of the community should contribute to creating the structure that governs community life.

Six- to 8-year-old children, who typically need to feel autonomous and powerful, can become invested in building and maintaining the quality of community life. They can understand rules and systems when they help to create them, and they are willing to reevaluate and change what does not work for the good of all. Teachers can create a structure with children in which they share responsibility for keeping the classroom neat and orderly, know how to get and use materials properly, and function with increasing levels of independence. Structure comes from a well-organized classroom environment, a daily schedule and routines that are predictable, and clear expectations about behavior in the classroom.

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Guiding Children's Learning

In a classroom community where children feel empowered to learn, teachers can create opportunities for children to acquire skills and content as they actively investigate, represent, and reflect on their increasing understanding of the world around them. They establish a "culture of inquiry" in which preconceptions are addressed and children convert facts into "usable knowledge" that is applied to new content (Donovan, Bransford, & Pellegrino, 1999, p. 2). When children are engaged in meaningful learning, they see a connection to the real world. The projects assigned, topics studied, and the lessons taught are both interesting and relevant to children.

Children have active learning experiences in which they handle materials, interview people, take trips, and do personal research and experiments that allow them to move from the concrete to more abstract levels of learning. Because they benefit from being challenged, teachers engage them in work that requires time to study and explore issues in depth. Assignments and lessons do not all look alike or require the same kind of product. Teachers organize the curriculum using an integrated approach that allows children to apply skills they are learning in reading, writing, math, science, social studies, technology, and the arts.

Assessing Children's Learning

A comprehensive approach to assessment enables teachers to make informed decisions about what to teach, plan instruction, and monitor and share children's progress with families in a meaningful way. They must observe children regularly and collect samples of their work. The work that primary grade children do every day—writing stories, making maps, creating paintings, solving math problems—is the best and most logical source of assessment information for both teachers and children. Gathering assessment information from daily activities provides an accurate and complete picture of what children know and can do.

Because primary grade children are deeply invested in what and how everybody else is doing and how they measure up, they should be involved appropriately in the assessment process. Children need to know exactly what is expected in a given assignment, get specific feedback on their work, and be able to describe the ways in which they have made progress over time.

Building a Partnership with Families

When families are involved, children's achievement is enhanced, teachers obtain support, and schools become better places for learning. Teachers involve families by taking time to learn about each child's family, involving families in the school and classroom community, establishing a structure for ongoing communication, sharing the curriculum, and involving families in the assessment process.

Teachers use the six strategies as the foundation that makes subject matter teaching meaningful and effective. Knowing the children helps teachers plan where to begin, which materials to choose, and what questions to ask. The classroom community that is created enables children to work in small groups, to share supplies, and to feel safe taking risks. The structure that is established enables children to work independently because they anticipate the day's events, understand classroom rules, and know how to find, use, and put away materials. The approach to guiding children's learning helps them construct their own understanding within each subject area. The approach to assessment offers many ways to find out what children are learning so that teachers can modify instructional approaches in order to address individual needs. Involving family members in homework and class projects that call for real-life application of skills and concepts enhances children's learning.

The framework remains constant so that teachers can use it to make appropriate decisions. They can consider:

- Do the displays reflect what children are studying?
- Am I building listening and speaking skills during class meetings?
- Do children have enough opportunities to make choices about how they represent what they are learning?
- How can I get children to do more editing of their writing?
- What would be a good way to incorporate math skills in our study of bridges?

- The math materials are not being kept organized. How can I get the children to address this problem?
- Are the small group science investigations allowing everyone to learn important skills?

Balancing children's needs and the demands placed on teachers to focus on facts, skills, and concepts is difficult for teachers. With this framework in place, the best elements of classroom management, instructional practices, and curriculum content teaching can be combined effectively.

The Challenge before Us

This paper has presented three curriculum frameworks that respond to developmental stages of children from birth through age 8. The adoption of an appropriate curriculum framework is only the first step. Curriculum implementation requires a long-term investment. It starts when program administrators adopt a curriculum that is consistent with their vision of high-quality services for children and families. Ongoing professional development and time for planning and reflection are essential if staff members are to become thoroughly familiar with the framework, knowledgeable about developmental stages, and able to construct a daily program that promotes each child's development. Equally important in implementing a curriculum is involving families in planning and learning about the approach.

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A Comprehensive Approach to Curriculum Development

Lisa Rosenthal & Andrea Michaelson,
with Laura Weishaupt

Abstract

This paper addresses how educators can encourage elementary age children to develop critical thinking skills and creativity while also meeting educational standards and maintaining learning goals. The teachers believe that a comprehensive curriculum (1) honors the role of all participants—teachers, children, and parents; (2) engages children in long-term projects and in-depth study; (3) offers opportunities for children to communicate their thinking using a variety of media; and (4) provides a fertile learning environment. The elements of practice used to meet these goals are (1) identifying skills, concepts, and methodology; (2) rich environments and resources; (3) firsthand experiences; (4) representation; (5) discussion and revision; (6) systematic instruction; (7) inquiry/research; and (8) assessment.

How do we as educators help elementary age children develop critical thinking skills necessary for the 21st century while also meeting educational standards? How do we encourage children's creativity and still maintain learning goals?

These aims for education are not mutually exclusive; rather, all play an essential role in young children's learning. Encouraging children's creativity by offering a variety of ways to represent their thinking helps motivate children and make learning experiences more authentic. Frequent assessments help ensure that learning goals are met and children are appropriately challenged.

But combining these elements into a coherent whole does not happen by accident. What takes place in a classroom or other learning environment is like a performance of an improvisational theater or music group. Endless hours of preparation, thought, and practice go into what appears to be an effortless orchestration.

In this paper, we describe our practices to give a view of what happens backstage, in the planning room, to make possible what takes place on stage, in the classroom. As part of our ongoing planning, we analyze the elements of our practice and offer examples of their use. We also show how the elements are combined through the example of a project we developed with our students.

We believe that by assessing and reflecting on our practices, and being willing to revise and adapt those practices to suit children's learning needs, we can not only meet educational standards but reach beyond them to exercise children's higher-order thinking skills.

The work we describe here is based on our experiences in a K-1 classroom at Corinne A. Seeds University Elementary School (UES), the laboratory school of the UCLA Graduate School of Education & Information Studies. We believe it is relevant for teachers of students at all elementary age levels.

Educational Philosophy

We believe a comprehensive curriculum:

- Honors the role of all participants—teachers, children, and parents. This element is at the core of our practice. Each child is seen as a strong, competent individual with his or her own cultural experiences, learning styles, and prior knowledge. As Elliot Eisner (1994) states, "It is through our differences that we enrich others" (p. 10). Parents are acknowledged as having ideas that are invaluable to learning experiences in the classroom. The teacher is seen as a researcher, a co-learner with children, and a collaborator with peers. The teacher's role is to acknowledge these strengths and assure that they become part of the classroom experience. Listening to and collaborating with students, colleagues, and parents is an ongoing process and is essential to the teacher's professional growth.
- Engages children in long-term projects and in-depth study.
- Offers opportunities for children to communicate their thinking using a variety of media. With each representation of an idea, set of ideas, or concepts, the child connects meaning and deepens understanding.
- Provides a fertile learning environment. Beyond the aesthetic and functional, a rich learning environment should reflect children's thinking and ideas so as to invite response, provoke discussion, and provide the teacher with data to reflect upon, assess, and plan collaboratively.

A comprehensive curriculum uses all these elements to encourage children to construct their own knowledge while also guiding them toward achieving the larger learning goals. It does so in an environment that reflects the classroom community: child, teacher, and parent.

Methodology

The elements of our practice used to meet these goals form a concentric learning process where all elements are interdependent (see Figure 1). We prepare beforehand with a discussion about concepts and the development of the environment. As we add the children's ideas and experiences, and as we acquire more knowledge from the environment, firsthand experiences, and inquiry, new thoughts arise that adjust our plans. Being flexible allows us to take advantage of learning opportunities, to fill in information for children, and to build on their understanding and inquiry.

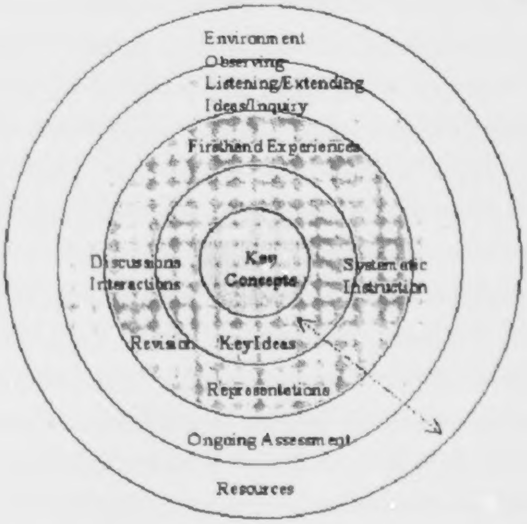

Figure 1. Elements of practice forming a concentric learning process.

Children gain a deeper understanding of concepts through a methodology that is designed to meet their differences. Children build their own knowledge through experiences and discovery rather than by attempting to memorize abstract facts. Their motivation and their opportunities for learning are greater since they are not limited by what the teacher perceives as interesting.

Identifying Skills, Concepts, and Methodology

During the pre-planning process, we identify skills, concepts, and methodology to guide instruction and decide which experiences to offer children to spark curiosity and prompt inquiry. For our science unit, we decided to use plants to illustrate life cycles. The

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California Science Framework recommends that for the plant life cycle, children's observations and experiences include seed germination, pollination, plant growth, survival needs of plant organisms, change, and decomposition. These recommendations formed the basis for the activities we developed. The following is an outline of this process:

Concepts to Develop

- Characteristics of organisms and life cycle of organisms

Guided Framework Questions

- What are the characteristics of living things?
- How do living things change throughout their lifetime?
- What do living things need to live and grow in their environments?
- What is the life cycle of a living thing?

Skills to Develop

- Make observations in the internal/external environment
- Use different resources to research information
- Represent understanding in a variety of media
- Communicate ideas verbally
- Generate inquiry
- Record observations/data
- Make predictions
- Use tools for investigation
- Work independently and cooperatively
- Build vocabulary

Rich Environments and Resources

A classroom should be a comfortable, inviting environment that offers flexibility to allow children to modify the arrangement of spaces as needed for their learning. Children's work is displayed to make their ideas visible and stimulate interactions such as questions, clarifications, explanations, and discussions. Materials and resources are easily accessible so as to foster independence and autonomy. They are specifically suited to support learning goals and to offer opportunities for children to demonstrate understanding.

As teachers, we support exploration and risk taking, thinking beyond the usual. Children's ideas are creatively expressed through their experimentation and use of many different techniques. Unconventional materials and tools are explicitly utilized according to our needs to guide the children toward the learning goals.

In one lesson, for example, children were given jute as a canvas and plant materials collected from their schoolyard to make a collage. Some children tied collections to their work. Some used the jute as a canvas and painted on it. Other children glued plant materials to the canvas. Some of the children used flower petals to graphically represent a plant or tree (see Figure 2). Through this activity, children explored the natural environment. Then they transformed their materials by using them as drawing tools.

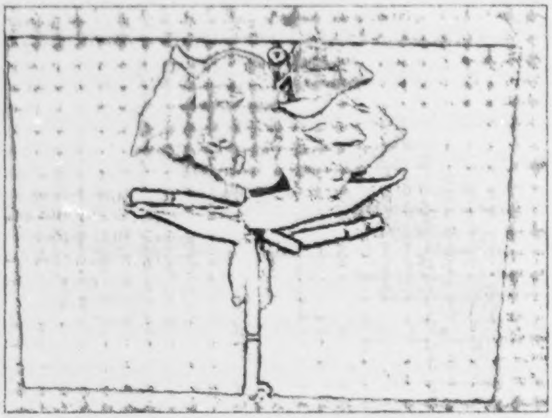

Figure 2. Children used canvas and plant materials to represent a plant.

Firsthand Experiences

Firsthand experiences provide children with the ability to connect prior knowledge with newly acquired knowledge and the opportunity to apply learning to their everyday lives. They also offer interactions to stimulate inquiry and discussions and incentive to research and learn more.

We began the first lesson by asking questions to assess prior knowledge and to provoke thought and exchange:

"Where do we find plants?"
"What do plants need to grow?"
"What things are made from plants?"

The class explored these questions by discussing what they had observed about their home and school environments. We then guided children in conducting experiments to determine optimal conditions for seed growth. They made predictions and then recorded their findings in journals. Using knowledge gained from their experiments, they planted seeds in individual cups, in their gardens at home, and in a communal garden so they could watch them germinate and grow. During a field trip to Descanso Gardens in La Canada, California, the children observed firsthand what they had learned and connected it to their classroom experiences.

Representation

Multiple representations help children: (1) communicate their thinking; (2) deepen their understanding of concepts; (3) see their ideas translated into different languages, such as art, movement, song, and drama, thus cultivating their multiliteracy; (4) provoke interactions, discussions, and inquiry about their work; and (5) access meaning as well as create their own meaning.

We use these representations to assess our process, stimulate creativity, and make visible children's learning. In looking at children's representations, we ask ourselves whether we are providing enough information. Looking at holes in children's work helps us know what holes there are in ours. They give us information about how to plan and allow us to assess the curriculum we have developed. Representations also invite response on the part of other children, teachers, parents, and visitors to the classroom, all of whom contribute to our dialogue and our thinking.

Plant Life Cycle in Animation. For example, children represented their understanding of the life cycle of a plant (from seed to flower) by drawing each stage of the process in a flipbook format. Creating a believable "moving picture" required planning and conceptualizing. Children had to take apart the stages, think about how to draw them, and focus on the details of the process as well as see them as part of a larger whole. The activity also offered opportunities for teachers and children to see how well children were grasping the concepts and where the gaps in their understanding lay. And it provided motivation for the children to seek out resources and do further research to fill in those gaps so they could create workable flipbooks (see Figure 3).

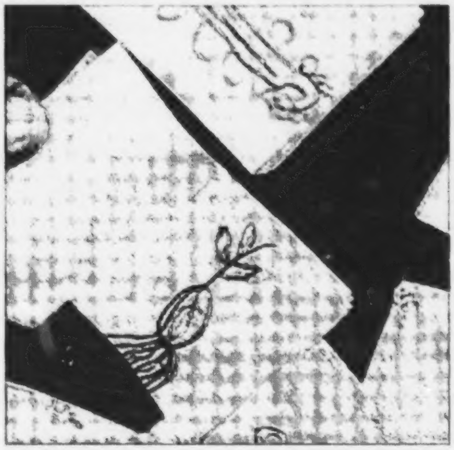

Figure 3. The children created flipbooks to represent their understanding of the life cycle of a plant.

Parts of a Flower in Clay. Children in two classrooms represented their understanding of the parts of a flower two dimensionally in clay. Many of the benefits were the same as for the flipbooks, applied now to the individual parts of the flower. In addition, shaping models from clay gave children a better sense of the physical dimensions of the flower parts (see Figure 4).

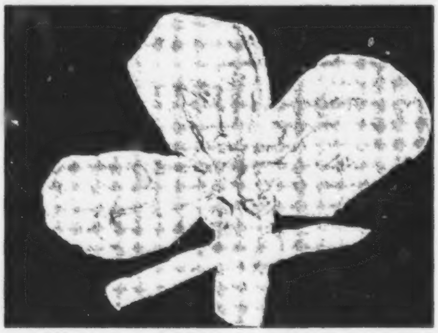

Figure 4. The children represented parts of a flower in clay.

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Parts of a Flower in Print. For this activity, children etched the names of the flower parts in foam. When they tried to print their etchings, they discovered that the words were inverted. After the children made several attempts to write the words so they would print legibly, a facilitator asked questions to illicit ideas about how to solve the problem. After discussion, one child came up with a solution—to write the words backwards. The children tested this suggestion and found it successful.

In using language, children learned more about the parts of a flower as well as developed their reading and writing skills. Communicating their ideas helped children refine their thinking and their problem-solving skills. This example also demonstrates a use of lexicon not available in the clay representation. Multiple representations help to broaden the depth of study (see Figure 5).

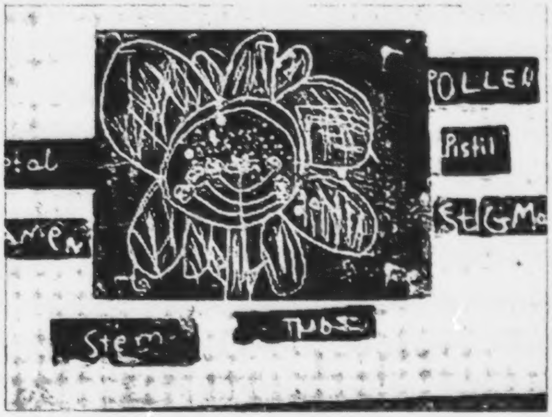

Figure 5. The children represented parts of a flower in print.

Discussion and Revision

In discussing their work, children (1) gain a deeper understanding of the concept, (2) acquire increased ability to communicate their ideas verbally, and (3) realize the gap in their understanding of the concept. With each revision, their understanding becomes more concrete, and they increase their ability to communicate more clearly.

A discussion between the teacher and a student, Rebecca, is illustrative. As Rebecca was making a print and was ready to label the parts of her flower, the teacher asked her to point to the flower's stamen. Rebecca replied that she wasn't sure which was the stamen and which was the stigma. After the teacher asked her to point to what she thought was the stamen, and reminded Rebecca that a flower has more than one, Rebecca remembered and was able to identify the part.

Similarly, we asked children to draw a line from the flower part to the corresponding word. This identification reinforces children's understanding of the parts of the flower while helping them build a scientific lexicon.

Finally, children created step-by-step graphic representations of the process of pollination in the form of storyboards. As one child explained her drawing to the teacher, the teacher asked the child to clarify her ideas about germination. The child used her body to show how the stem breaks through the seed coat. In communicating through body language, the child demonstrated her understanding and clarified her ideas. She then was able to make revisions to her original storyboard frames (see Figure 6).

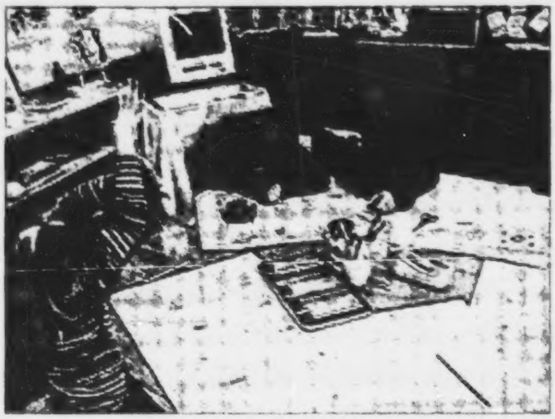

Figure 6. Children created representations of the process of pollination in storyboards.

Systematic Instruction

Perhaps the teacher's most important role is to know when and how to provide children with knowledge and resources to take their learning to the next level.

To accomplish this goal, he or she must constantly make choices about pedagogical approaches, deciding which approach is best suited for the purpose. Oftentimes it will be direct instruction to teach a lesson on a concept that children are confused about or for which other developmentally appropriate resources are not available. Such lessons emerge out of the children's inquiry rather than being planned by the teacher *a priori*.

To determine what knowledge children need to acquire, the teacher listens to their ideas, assesses their work, and plans collaboratively to redefine tasks to meet more specific goals. Throughout the process, it is important that the teacher remain flexible enough to provide materials and resources necessary for on-demand learning.

Inquiry/Research

As children represent and discuss their ideas, inquiry arises. This process intrinsically motivates children and leads them to further investigate and research their questions and ideas.

For example, as one child described her understanding of pollination to her classmates, storyboard in hand, a question arose regarding an idea in her representation. The child had shown that a bee can pollinate two flowers of the same kind in different colors, but some of her classmates disagreed, believing that the two flowers must be of the same color. Motivated to prove her hypothesis, the child sought the most readily available resource, the expertise of the gardener on the school grounds. The gardener confirmed that yes, certain flowers can be pollinated in different colors, thus supplying the information and also demonstrating the value of doing research and going to an authoritative source.

The children's discussion demonstrates one of the values of multiple representations. The more children represent their thinking and talk about their representation, the more often inquiry arises. When children have the opportunity to discuss their representation (such as a storyboard) and communicate about or verbalize what they have done, critical thinking occurs.

Assessment

Both formal and informal assessments reveal to the teacher and student what the child knows and needs to know. They also indicate what the teacher may need to provide to ensure that learning goals are met and knowledge of the concepts are attained. Ongoing assessments are a critical part of the flexible planning process. Many of the methods we have described, such as storyboards and flipbooks, serve as informal assessments. Other methods include direct questioning of a child to see if he or she has grasped content and asking students to draw or write what they know about pollination in their journals.

In the case of the student who read back her storyboard, both she and the teacher noticed that there were steps missing from her explanation of the pollination process. The teacher saw the gaps in the child's understanding of the concept and what the teacher needed to provide to deepen that understanding.

Nature Must Go On! A Long-Term, In-Depth Investigation

Our work on the play Nature Must Go On!, a project the children initiated, provides an illustration of how all the elements and methods we have described above can work together.

During the study of the life cycle of plants, children made various representations in clay, on paper, using the computer, and so forth. With each representation, their understanding deepened. During a discussion about one of these representations, two children suggested that a play be written about the life cycle of plants. Their peers in their own and another K-1 classroom at the school unanimously agreed, and so our in-depth investigation began.

Children conceived the story; wrote the script; and created music, costumes, and sets. Conducted over the course of six months, the children's work on the play resulted in their meeting curricular goals while learning skills and gaining knowledge in science, mathematics, language, critical thinking, and the arts.

Throughout the project, teachers guided instruction and student inquiry, with the teacher playing a "facilitator" role to scaffold student learning and to help children generate and seek answers to specific questions. Rather than directing all learning, they created opportunities for learning by supporting children's own inquiry.

Parents supported the teacher in this role by volunteering in the classroom and using their knowledge and talents to teach specific skills and concepts.

As Sylvia C. Chard (1998) tells us in *The Project Approach,* long-term projects allow us to meld children's ideas and experiences with the learning goals. She writes:

> Children not only need to know *how* to use a skill but also *when* to use it. They need to learn to recognize for themselves the contexts in which the skill might be useful and the purposes it can most appropriately serve. Project work and systematic instruction can be seen as providing complementary learning opportunities. In systematic instruction the children acquire the skills, and in project work they apply those skills in meaningful contexts. The project work can be seen as the part of the curriculum that is planned in negotiation with the children and that supports and extends the more formal and teacher-directed instructional elements. (p. 10)

Inspiring Literature

The school librarian offered inspiration for the play by gathering literature about plants and flowers. The two classes read and discussed stories such as *James and the Giant Peach, Jack and the Beanstalk,* and the *Chalk Box Kid.*

We provided systematic instruction to give the children a foundation for the story-writing process. A parent who is a professional writer visited the classroom to discuss elements of the story. These elements were broken down so that the children could begin to write stories that incorporated problems and solutions, protagonists and antagonists, setting, and so forth.

We then created groups composed of children from both rooms to write stories about the life cycle of plants. Next, the eight stories were presented to both classrooms, and the children democratically voted on their favorite story.

The children chose to produce a story about a magical plant growing out of the roof of a haunted mansion. As they were writing the story, we took the group to look at an old adobe house that had been built on the school grounds by previous students many years ago. After having them observe the foliage growing out of the roof, we asked the children to illustrate their ideas for the story's setting (see Figure 7). The teacher asked the children to describe the characteristics of the plant so they would think about and gain a clearer vision for the "magical plant." One group of children used their bodies to represent their ideas (see Figure 8).

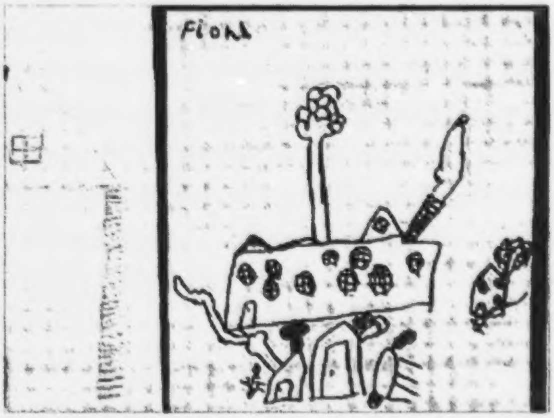

Figure 7. The children illustrated a story about a magical plant.

Writing and Revising the Script

We had many discussions about the differences between a story and a play. What did a story need that a play did not? As children talked about their ideas and the teacher listened, the story was fleshed out. Working this way in a group required that children use negotiation skills. They acted as editors for each other and learned how to listen to and evaluate ideas different from their own. The teacher

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then read the children their original story. New ideas unfolded as they heard their story retold and children made revisions based on the new ideas.

Figure 8. The children used their bodies to represent their ideas about the magical plant.

Because many of the children were learning in both Spanish and English, the class decided that both languages should be represented in the play. Children took turns explaining which characters should be Spanish speaking and which should be English speaking. Then they took a vote to decide, and one child used her math skills to tally the votes.

As children acquired more knowledge about plants and pollination through their learning activities and investigations, they wanted to revise the script to incorporate their newfound knowledge. In all, the script went through five revisions before the final draft was complete. Significantly, these revisions happened organically and out of the children's own motivation. The story grew and developed because the children, guided by their teachers, saw a need for this development.

Revision in Learning

Inspired by a child's questions about what other animals pollinate, the teacher shared additional resources. When children learned that a bat can also pollinate, they insisted a line be added to include this newfound knowledge. In this example of inquiry, the teacher listened to the child's questions, responded flexibly with new resources, scaffolded the child's thinking, and applied new knowledge. As this newfound knowledge was incorporated into the script, children felt their ideas were heard. Their input contributed to their self-confidence and their investment in the learning process, as well as strengthened their role in it. A similar addition came when the children insisted that their discussion about pollination and the flowers of two different colors also be included in the script.

Composing the Score

The children wanted to incorporate music and song into the play, so the music teacher joined both classes one day each week to help them compose the score. Children helped compose the melody to their song "Pollination." Their lyrics, shown here, are another representation of their grasp of the scientific concepts:

> Pollination, pollination,
> The bee goes to the stigma
> And gets the pollen.
> Pollination, pollination,
> Flower to flower,
> Bees fly in the sun.
>
> Pollination, pollination,
> The bee takes the pollen
> To the stamen.
> Pollination, pollination,
> Flower to flower,
> Bees fly in the sun.

Writing this lyrical poetry gave children with different strengths an opportunity to use another form of representation to communicate their understanding about pollination.

Exploration of Sound

Nine children formed a committee to produce sound effects for the play. Children became more aware of the sounds around them after a reading of *The Listening Walk,* by Paul Showers. They started thinking about the play and the atmosphere they wanted to create. They decided it needed to be spooky, scary, and near the ocean. There had to be howling voices, creaking doors, and flapping bats.

Children were asked to bring in something from home that they felt made a sound that would bring the play's setting to life. They suggested that silverware be tied together to create the sound of chimes to represent a magical flower sound. Children practiced making a flapping sound to imitate the flapping wings of a bat.

As part of the investigation of sound, a parent arranged a visit to an echo chamber and its opposite, an anechoic chamber. Back in the classroom, we asked children to draw the rooms they had visited. The drawings provoked discussions about the experience. The children concluded that they must make their sound effects louder than normal so their audience would be able to hear them in the space where the play would be performed. The children's experiences with sound heightened their awareness of the many sounds around them. They developed a more critical ear to differentiate between pitches and sounds.

Casting

Casting for the play needed to accommodate 43 children. After the teachers and children discussed the importance of each role on and off stage, the children were asked to write down their top three choices for the roles they wanted to play. Teachers prepared the children for the inevitable overlapping of choices. Although many did not get their first choice, they learned to compromise.

We also used problem-solving opportunities such as the one related to casting as material for homework exercises. In one homework packet, for example, we presented this question: "In our play, Nature Must Go On!, there are 43 children. If we have 9 musicians, 1 narrator, 3 characters (Michael, Daniela, and Brittany), and 2 magic flowers, how many children do we have left to play all the other parts? Show your thinking."

Character Development

We asked children to research and represent their characters. They used a variety of resources, such as books, magazines, experts, and the Internet. As part of their research, the children were asked to think about how their character moves, what it eats, how it communicates, and so forth (see Figure 9). As children acquired more knowledge about their characters, and became more invested in creating their costumes, they devoted more attention to detail and more time to their representations (see Figure 10).

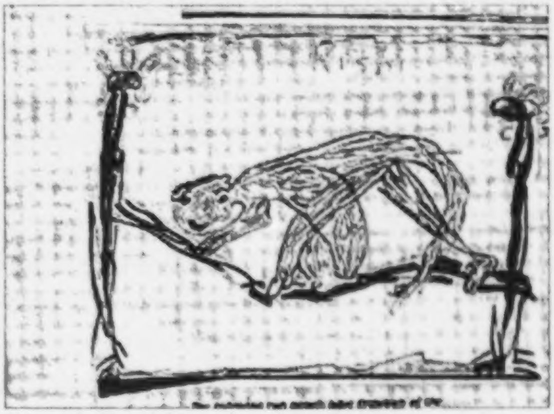

Figure 9. The children drew their characters.

In Writer's Workshop, children wrote their autobiographies. Because of their investment in the play, they enthusiastically described elements about themselves as well as their characters. They drew these in detail, and we combined them into programs for the play (see Figure 11).

Set Design and Construction

The play takes place in two settings: a haunted mansion by the ocean and a rainforest. The children thought carefully about the design of the sets and drew their ideas. Initially it was important for them to include the following in the set of their haunted mansion: a flower sticking out of the roof, creaking stairs, a graveyard, and a forbidding looking door. As development occurred and children had new ideas, they incorporated these ideas into the play. A woodworking specialist helped the children realize their ideas for the set design by assisting them with measuring, cutting, and constructing. Children gained confidence in seeing their ideas come to life and knowing their ideas were valued.

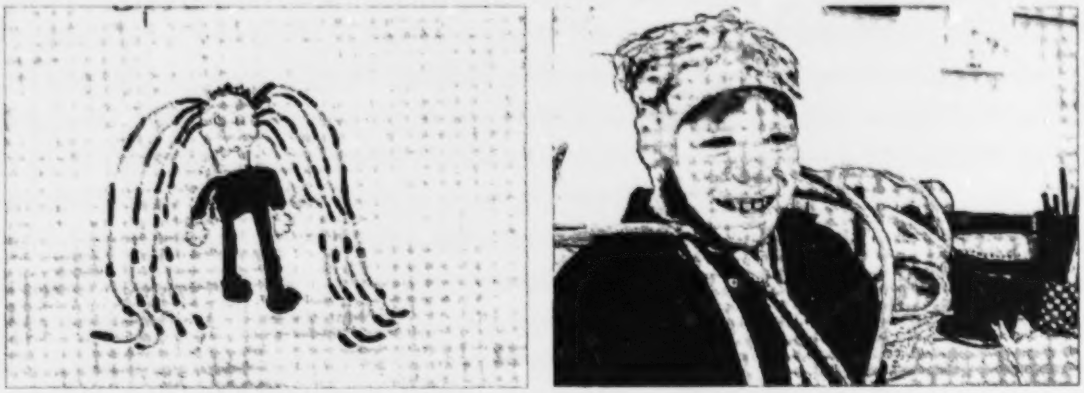

Figure 10. As the children invested more in creating their costumes, their representations became more detailed.

To incorporate mathematics instruction, we asked children questions involving measurement and estimation. "How wide does the door have to be?" "How many children at a time will be going through it?" To test their ideas, the teacher had the children stand together, two or three across, and then measured their bodies.

Parents and children worked together to build and paint the haunted mansion. Parents from the monolingual and bilingual classrooms were active participants throughout the play's production. Children made new friendships as a result of both classes' long-term collaboration. They engaged in spontaneous discussion regarding the play on the playground, in the bathroom, during recess, and during lunch. Ideas were brewing everywhere.

Rainforest, Scene 2 Design and Construction

After reading *The Great Kapok Tree* and looking through other information and fictional texts about rainforests, the children had a clear idea of what they wanted to include in their design. As they gathered more information about the rainforest, their ideas for the set became more elaborate. Their drawings included vines, exotic animals, and a variety of foliage. These initial drawings became a reference for the elements of the forest and laid a foundation for what developed into more creative imagery (see Figure 12). Children read about, drew, and painted large leaves and vines for the rainforest scene. Raw, hands-on materials were collected from participating families to save costs. Everything was created and fabricated out of simple sheets and plain, simple sheer fabric. Parents' and grandparents' ideas enriched the children's learning experience and the classroom community (see Figure 13). A grandmother, for example, taught children how to sew.

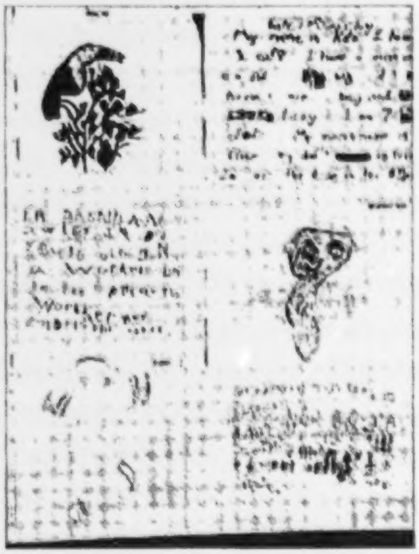

Figure 11. The drawings and descriptions of the children's characters were used in the programs for the play.

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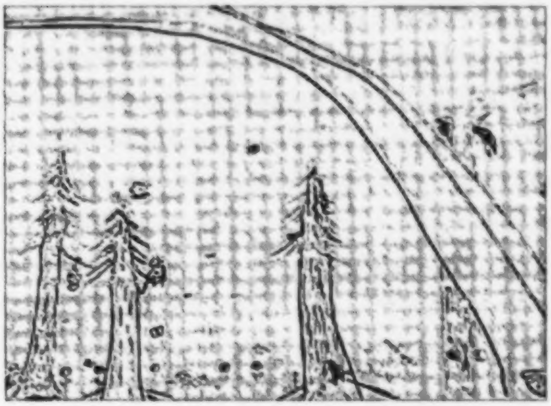

Figure 12. The children designed the rainforest scene.

Figure 13. With help from parents, the children created the rainforest.

Costumes

We engaged in small group discussions and work sessions that covered ideas about creating unconventional, distinguishable features for the characters' costumes. One girl, for example, dressed her body as a butterfly's body and held her "wings." Another girl designed a costume for which she wore a butterfly on her head.

We sculpted most forms from wire and paper or wire and fabric, which were then painted. Children collaborated in the creation and design of their costumes. For example, one child looked at an illustration in *The Great Kapok Tree* for inspiration for her butterfly costume.

The children's design and creation of the imaginary flowers developed as a direct result of their in-depth study of flowers and their parts. Each flower included stamens, stigmas, pistils, petals, and so forth. We encouraged children to create without preconceived ideas about what a typical flower costume would look like. The result was magical (see Figure 14).

Figure 14. The children designed their flower costumes.

Conclusion

Taking a comprehensive approach to curriculum development offers a variety of learning benefits to both students and teachers. Vital to understanding and being successful with this approach, however, is recognizing that creating a curriculum cannot be done in isolation. When the elements of practice include (1) identification of skills, concepts, and methodology; (2) rich environments and resources; (3) firsthand experiences; (4) representation; (5) discussion and revision; (6) systematic instruction; (7) inquiry/research; and (8) assessment, the resulting curriculum provides children with greater motivation, a deeper understanding of concepts, and more lasting connections with the content material.

Just as every component of a stage production—whether it occurs backstage or onstage—contributes to the overall success of the show, each of the

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elements listed above is fundamental to the running of a classroom and to providing children with enriching, stimulating, and successful educational experiences. In showing respect for each child's potential and for his or her capacity, this kind of teaching practice challenges children to do their best and to bring their whole being to the activity of learning. By recognizing them as individuals with valuable knowledge, thoughts, and ideas, a comprehensive approach to curriculum development can nurture and challenge children to reach toward and achieve their potential. The results are learners who achieve to the highest standards possible.

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Curriculum Development and Head Start Teacher Training: In Two Voices

Janey Marquez & Gloria McGinty

Abstract

One of the most important tasks in working with teachers is to help them develop their own abilities to create developmentally appropriate curriculum for young children. This paper reflects on, from two perspectives, the ongoing process of how teachers develop an understanding of how children learn and how that process affects curriculum development and implementation. The dialogue between a teacher trainer and a teacher she has been working with for six years reveals how the process unfolds over time. The teacher trainer and teacher reflect on their experiences in ongoing teacher training and implementation of emergent, project-oriented curriculum.

In *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in "Real Life,"* Carol Anne Wein (1995) describes the contradictions of some teachers who appear to "have an allegiance not to a single framework for practice but simultaneously to two contradictory frameworks" (p. xi). She terms these frameworks "developmentally appropriate practice" and "teacher dominion" (p. 3). The framework "teacher dominion" refers to where the locus of power in what occurs in the classroom rests. "Teacher dominion asserts the teacher's authority in all domains except when she explicitly removes it" (p. 5). Wein draws from extensive observation, videotaping, and interviews that she did with five early childhood teachers over the course of a year. She states that the teachers drew from both the frameworks either as "inherited scripts for action" or that they would "surface an action as problematic or inadequate, stop and reflect—and generate something new" to respond to children's behavior or to develop curriculum for activities in their classrooms (p. 10).

In addition to the frameworks, Wein defines "practical knowledge" and "scripts for action" that teachers use to inform their practice. Practical knowledge includes "everything the teacher brings of herself to the moment of teaching—beliefs, attitudes, feelings, reflections, gestures, temperament and personal history" (p. 10). Scripts for action are "repeated patterns of routine practice that teachers use" (p. 12). They develop from doing something that "works successfully to accomplish a teacher need" (p. 13). It becomes an established pattern for accomplishing a task. In *Training Teachers: A Harvest of Theory and Practice,* Margie Carter and Deb Curtis (1994) refer to the need for teachers to examine their own "filters"—the experiences and conditioning they bring to a teaching situation—as well as examining their roles and strategies to see what role they play in their interactions with children.

To "stop and reflect" is an action I have been striving for in work with teachers I have been training for the past several years in a Head Start program in Arizona. This paper is an opportunity to "stop and reflect," to question the established routines and scripts for action, for myself and a teacher who has herself "reflected" and generated something new. We will examine our filters and our role as educators, mine with adults and Gloria McGinty's with children, and try to define what worked and why.

Throughout the paper, we will shift from my voice to Gloria's (in italics) as we attempt to share a dialogue about curriculum development and teacher training.

Staff Training

Our program, Southwest Human Development Head Start, is located in five school districts in the Phoenix area. Our classrooms, for the most part, are on elementary school campuses, in standard classrooms, with some modifications for accommodating preschool children. Our centers range from one to four classrooms per school, and teachers often share a single classroom in a morning and afternoon class. Each teacher and assistant works with a single class, with 16 to 20 children, depending on classroom space, type of program, and individual class needs. All classrooms serve from 2 to 4 children with special needs, usually for speech and language services, but frequently for services to address more involved needs. Most of our classrooms have a majority of children who speak Spanish as a first language, and at least one of the staff in each classroom speaks Spanish.

We provide ongoing inservice training for our staff in curriculum development, working with special needs and challenging behaviors, and other areas as the need arises. We have been providing training in emergent curriculum and the Project Approach for the past several years. All child development managers have attended Project Approach training in summer institutes. The child development managers are assigned to specific classrooms, and our responsibilities include monitoring for compliance to the Head Start performance standards and local licensing criteria, supervising the instructional staff in terms of attendance, work performance, etc., and helping them develop their teaching technique by making monthly classroom observations and sharing our feedback with them to improve or maintain overall quality of service. We are also looking for carryover from inservice training to the classroom.

Southwest Human Development, our grantee agency, has a commitment to lifelong learning. The agency has been active in developing teacher training committed to sound principles of adult learning. We support training for our staff in a variety of ways: agency seminars, tuition reimbursement, on-site support for Child Development Associate (CDA) training, and inservice training.

For several years, I have been involved with planning and implementing training in curriculum development for our child development staff. We have experimented with many different approaches:

- We provided training to our teachers and assistants together and separately.
- We tried to determine which teachers were at different developmental levels, to adjust the training to meet their needs.
- We used videotapes, from the Project Approach and of the teachers in their classroom, to give them feedback.
- We used outside trainers on emergent curriculum and materials they had developed—all in the quest for the best ways to help teachers grow in their understanding of developmentally appropriate practice.

We continued to run into the concerns that Wein described. Our teachers could articulate our curriculum philosophy and define developmentally appropriate practice, but when it came to "real life," they often resorted to their "scripts for action" that sprung from the framework of teacher dominion. However, I have also seen teachers become more developmentally appropriate in their work with children. I have observed them "stop and reflect and develop something new." And I have spent some time exploring with some of them how this change happens. One teacher, Gloria, agreed to share this process with us in this paper.

Changing Practice

I have been a teacher with Southwest Head Start for 12 years. I came to Head Start from a private nonprofit program. At that time, my training had been in the field of elementary education with some classes in early childhood, as I had started working on my CDA certification. Over the years that I have been with Southwest, I have had many hours of training, but it has taken many years for me to change my way of thinking and of teaching children. I have learned that I can apply the principles of the Project Approach to help me find *positive ways to deal with the child who exhibits difficult behaviors. I can allow a child to take the lead and show me his interests. By implementing the children's ideas and using their knowledge, I can better help them to manage their behavior. As a result, the children have more self-control and I can better manage my class. But learning a different approach and putting it into consistent practice has taken a long time. I understood theoretically that these outcomes could result from implementing the Project Approach, but it took awhile for me to really accept it as a way to teach.*

One of the first times I saw how the Project Approach can help with disruptive behavior was when a child in my class, who was often difficult to work with, became interested in the book Where the Wild Things Are *(Sendak, 1963). With the help of my manager, I started expanding activities based on the book into our activities. We made a boat. We made masks. We acted the story out and made our own books. Throughout this time, some but not all of the disruptive behaviors diminished. But my practice didn't change overnight. I still wrote my lesson plans around things I wanted to teach—things I felt that children needed to learn or do. But slowly, I was beginning to see a change in the way I developed those plans.*

Around this time, we had a visitor come to my classroom. Because Southwest Head Start was offering training in the Project Approach, Lilian Katz, who was visiting in the Phoenix area, was invited to come speak with the teachers and visit some classrooms. I remember how she came into my classroom and how proud I was to show off my artwork. That is how I used to view the children's projects in my class—as "mine!" Lilian spoke briefly to me about my philosophy, and as a result of that conversation, the way that I taught started to change. She asked me, "How do you apply what your children are interested in into your curriculum?" I stood speechless and stumbled over my words. After she left, I began observing the children in my class more closely and asked more open-ended questions about their interests. Then I began building on their interests by offering materials that reflected their knowledge. On reflection, I feel that this was the turning point. I could see that by providing activities that followed the children's interest, the interest of just one child in this case, the atmosphere in my class changed.

I was working with Gloria as her managing supervisor and also as a trainer when she began to see these changes take place. Gloria, Beth, one of our speech and language therapists, and I gave a workshop at that time to share some of our insights into how using this type of curriculum would benefit children with speech delay and behavior challenges. But I could still see Gloria struggle with planning and presenting a more project-oriented curriculum. She often reverted to her "scripts for action," the traditional teacher-directed, clock-oriented, concept-driven curriculum that had been sufficient for so many years. As her manager, and as a trainer, I felt challenged to help her and our other staff grapple with the philosophy of child-centered, emergent, project-oriented curriculum and how to implement it. I looked for the best resources I could find to help them learn how to put these theories into action. I used techniques for teacher training from guides by Elizabeth Jones and John Nimmo (1994) and by Margie Carter and Deb Curtis (1994). We purchased copies of *Reflecting Children's Lives: A Handbook for Planning Child-Centered Curriculum* (Curtis & Carter, 1996) and developed a year-long inservice training around it. But I would still go into the classrooms and see teachers acting out those "scripts for action" that had been shaped by "cultural and social experiences and forces, or by internal needs of which they were but dimly or not at all aware" (Berlak & Berlak, 1981, as cited in Wein, 1995, p. 12).

Even though I could see ways that having a curriculum that was more responsive to children's interests could benefit the children, reduce some acting-out behaviors, and make teaching young children more enjoyable, I found it hard to sustain. One of the biggest challenges was maintaining the energy needed to develop and support a project. On days when things just didn't go well, it was easier to go back to a very directed style. It was what I knew best. When I had to expend time and energy dealing with problem behaviors, it was quicker to plan or set out a more teacher-directed activity. If children were sitting down in a small group, my classroom looked to be "under con-

trol." If my classroom was under control, then I felt more competent. But this strategy didn't always work, and I came to see that the children's interests were just as important as my need for all children to be in circle at the same time doing the same thing.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

In our Head Start program, we have a strong commitment to applying constructivist learning theories to our adult education programs as well as our early childhood curriculum. As Elizabeth Jones writes, "teachers learn about teaching and learning by playing the teacher script, observing what happens, and discussing all the possibilities with other teachers. In this process, they come to see themselves as people who know—thereby people capable of making appropriate choices for themselves and for children" (Jones, 1993, p. viii). We understand that "people construct new knowledge by connecting their current understandings and experiences to new information and ideas" (Carter & Curtis, 1994, p. 19). Our instructional staff, those that have been with us for a while, learned and can articulate our curriculum philosophy and the principles of developmentally appropriate practice. But back in the classroom, the implementation of these practices is often missing. Again, Wein (1995) describes this contradiction as the distinction between "knowing-that and knowing-how" (p. 95). She states, "In terms of the ideology of developmentally appropriate practice, we can distinguish between knowing about the practice and having the performance skills to implement it." Wein describes six interrelated aspects of developmentally appropriate practice that teachers need to be comfortable with, in "our attitude toward it, its value to us, and our motivation to do it" (p. 95). These aspects are:

- Teacher observation of individual children as a basis for curriculum decisions
- Teacher focus on child process in activity
- An understanding of play and teacher roles to extend and support it
- The importance of opportunities for child choices
- The importance of child-initiated activity
- Support for child problem solving (Wein, 1995, p. 96)

As I talked with Janey about these aspects, I thought of an occurrence in my classroom. One day as I was thinking about lesson plans, I heard one of the children talking about how her dad played the harmonica. The child continued to entertain the group on how her dad made this music. So I asked her to invite him to visit our class so she could introduce him and he could play his instrument. Because of this brief activity, my planning took a turn, and I started introducing more instruments to the class. We had a guest come who told a story about music and had the children help with the story using instruments that came from many places. The children made musical instruments, danced to different styles of music, shared music from their homes and cultures, observed a powwow and a marching band, and made books and collages about their favorite music and instruments. As Janey and I talked about this activity, we identified several of the aspects quite easily.

In this story about Gloria's music project, all six of the aspects for developmentally appropriate practice are present. And as we worked on this paper, I heard her say things like, "through observation, I am more aware of the children's interest," or "I can follow the lead of the children," or "children are curious about objects they see—they want to know more about them and they want to explain to others how they work." But Gloria is the first to say that she has a fragile grasp on the implementation of developmentally appropriate practice. As I have worked with the instructional staff as a trainer and with the staff that I supervise and monitor, I constantly find teachers who can tell me that children learn best from hands-on activities, and that all children are not interested in the same thing at the same time and have very different attention spans, etc. They know all those things that we would take into consideration as we plan for young children, but everyday I also see teachers waiting for a group of 3- and 4-year-olds to all be sitting quietly, with their hands in their laps, before starting to read a story—or all of them being lined up with their hands behind their backs before going outdoors or to the bathroom.

What are the barriers to the teachers being more capable of sustaining their child-centered, project-oriented curriculum and having more consistently appropriate classrooms? Elizabeth Jones (1993), in *Growing Teachers: Partnerships in Staff Development*, says that "early childhood staff who appear to lack creativity and motivation"... are "adults with complex lives (who) have pressing needs that leave them little energy to invest in their work beyond its minimum requirements" (p. xiv). Our staff members certainly have many pressing needs. Most are parents, many of them with young children. The teachers who don't have at least an associate of arts degree are being required to get one by the fall of 2003. All of our assistants are required to take CDA training after one semester of employment and complete a specific number of units each school year. We are experiencing difficulty recruiting new staff, so some are doing extra duties. And there are, it seems, more children who are exhibiting challenging behaviors and more children who are being identified with special needs entering our programs at younger ages. As I asked this question of Gloria, who doesn't have children, and has a AA degree, she shared the following:

> *It is very easy for a teacher to return to the old way of teaching, in which every child does the same thing at the same time and is not seen as an individual who enters the classroom with unique ideas and knowledge. When children have challenging behaviors, I can revert to doing more traditional concept activities to fill up time, to give me a way to deal with the problems. I don't have enough time or energy to spend on more engaging themes that require more planning, observation, and attention to the classroom environment, facilitating props, and expanding play. My energy is expended dealing with the disruptive child, and none is available to work on developing a new project. Sometimes I find myself returning to seasonal types of activities due to time constraints and the amount of paperwork I have to do, or because I have a challenging class.*
>
> *Some teachers feel that the training they receive can be overwhelming when it introduces too many new ideas or too much information at one time. That's why it was helpful to have training in the Project Approach for over two years, so I could finally understand it and have plenty of opportunity to try out new methods in my classroom. I have some suggestions about training that other teachers have shared with me. Some of them think it's better to have the same training throughout the year the way we did with the Project Approach and emergent curriculum. Others think that allowing them to assist or train new staff might help them solidify their own skills. Some even want other teachers with more experience to help them identify projects and then walk them step by step through them. I also think that the developmental level of the teacher's understanding is important, but teachers with different developmental understanding can help one another. When more seasoned teachers shared what they knew, other teachers gained knowledge from their peers. I know that I have gotten better at being able to see potential projects. One day while I was visiting a friend's classroom, I observed a boy begin to wash a bike. He poured water on the bike and then added sand, commenting, "Boy, is this bike dirty. I need to wash it." I shared what I'd seen with the teacher and suggested that she had the beginning of a project there, that maybe she could expand on the child's interest. The next day I was subbing in that room, and the same child ask for cloth and soap to wash the bike again. This interest was definitely something that could have been expanded into a more involved play theme.*

Developing and Implementing Training

In *Training Teachers*, Carter and Curtis (1994) discuss their approach to the problem that Gloria mentioned about training that introduces too much too fast. They choose one or two big ideas and spend time on the topic to give the learner the opportunity to reframe and consolidate his or her knowledge. As much as we try to follow this strategy, it always seems that there is so much more we want to add into the training, because the time available for training is so limited and there is so much we want everyone to know. We need to listen to our staff and to our training mentors. And we need to listen to the words of Elizabeth Jones (1993) who tells us to "have faith in self-fulfilling prophecies—faith that teachers, viewed as interesting and competent by colleagues worthy of respect, will become more thoughtful about their work, will continue to seek input from others, and will thereby become increasingly empowered as critical thinkers and problem solvers" (p. xiv).

Developing and implementing training is hard work, and similar to what happens with our children in our Head Start program, we may not see the gains right away. Sometimes the apparent lack of change is discouraging and causes us, as trainers and as teachers, to question the efficacy of our work. We have to watch for small changes and bolster them. Time for training is so limited, and there is so much we want to cover, so we succumb to the "temptation to squeeze in as many ideas as we can." But if we persevere, we can "grow teachers," and the results are exciting for us as trainers, for the teachers who see educating children as a powerful occupation, and, most of all, for the children. I think Gloria can express it best:

Last year, I noticed two girls in the dramatic play area playing with cameras, posing and taking one another's picture. I pointed them out to a student teacher I had in my class, and we discussed how really involved they had been pretending to take pictures. We decided to find out what they knew about cameras, and we made a web. We were able to provide a camera for every three children in the class. We showed them how to look through the viewfinder and find what they wanted to photograph. They took pictures of one another and things in and outside the classroom. They took pictures of family members. We made a mural of their photos labeled with dictations about what they had photographed. They made a classroom scrapbook. Since then, I have had a lot more ideas about things we can do with cameras. I am planning to take a workshop offered by Polaroid to learn more about different ways to use cameras. I also want to show them more pictures and books of pictures by other photographers and have them learn more about the process of what happens to the film. I can't stop thinking about different things I can do with this project. But I have learned that I must be flexible and follow the children, so things might change. I realize after all this time that if children are learning what they find interesting by initiating the activity, they will be in the circle everyday waiting to find out what happens next.

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Preparing Teachers to Work with Diverse Populations

"Marcus Did It": A Review of a Diversity Workshop and Other Creative Education Practices for College Classrooms

Jeanne Helm

Abstract

This paper describes a diversity sensitivity workshop that changed the climate in a junior college early childhood classroom. Inspired by the workshop, an instructor developed 12 techniques for use in a college classroom, including: (1) chart presentations, (2) community surveys, (3) authentic projects, (4) board games, (5) journals, and (6) process drama.

"Marcus opened our eyes." "Marcus made us uncomfortable." "Marcus stirred it up." Let me explain.

A Diversity Workshop

Marcus, a counselor at our local college, initiated "diversity sensitivity" workshops—open to any discipline at the junior college. I asked Marcus to conduct a workshop with a class of 25 child care students studying a chapter on diversity.

Marcus entered our class one evening. He proceeded to give us the guidelines of a workshop called "Barnga." By participating in "Barnga," students come to realize that all persons have similarities and differences (Blahnik & Brown, 1999). During the workshop, we broke into four groups to play an apparently innocent card game. We were told to "read the rules."

The following hour was a surprise to those who were fortunate enough to be a part of this training in diversity. In the usually quiet and respectful classroom of child care students, there were sudden bursts of laughter, giggles, pouts, and gestures of misunderstandings. Why? Marcus chose an active learning approach to teacher education to spark the classroom's understanding of diversity.

Marcus started the evening controlling the students in an authoritarian manner. " No talking..." "Read the rules..." The game of "spades" sparked dissension and uncomfortable thoughts. The tension mounted as the participants rotated. The leaders and followers were obvious. The need for verbal communication became paramount.

Marcus smiled as he agreed to let us discuss this experience. The anticipated relief resulted when the students could finally release their thoughts in words. Once the students were allowed to talk, there was a mighty exchange of thoughts and revelations. Yes, the rules were different in each group. Yes, the need to communicate verbally is important. *But what if you do not speak the same language? What if you do not come from the same background?* A lively discussion followed.

As the semester progressed after our experience, Marcus was still with us in spirit. Comments surfaced such as "Marcus is sitting on my shoulder wondering why you said that" and "Marcus wouldn't like that comment" or "What would Marcus do?"

Techniques to Help Students Understand Bias

This spirit led me to try some innovative methods in my classroom to help solve ethical problems in diversity. The following 12 techniques may be helpful in other college classrooms as well:

1. *Chart Presentations:* Groups of three students are required to present a chart (compiled in class) to relate tangible activities to show understanding of family fears, language barriers, and counterbias techniques of special needs.
2. *Community Survey:* The college students are encouraged to interview community child care directors and parents of children in child care to determine the need to communicate the traditions of families in the community (see the appendix). This survey is then included in the "director's forum" (see #5).
3. *Authentic Projects in Classrooms:* Quilts are constructed in the college classroom to show diversity, even at the college level. College students are asked to draw a sign of their culture on a quilt block. These blocks are connected as a group project (see Helm, Huebner, & Long, 2000).
4. *Reports of Authors' Approach to Diversity:* These reports can be interesting and innovative if the requirement includes overheads, Powerpoint slides, and poster presentations.
5. *Director's Forum:* These discussion evenings are a part of my 200-level classes. They are initiated by a survey presented to the local center directors (see #2). Results of this survey are compiled into a list and presented to all participants before the forum begins. The class listens and interacts as the center directors discuss the challenges and tribulations in working with a team of child care workers.
6. *"What Would You Do if..." Cards for Classroom Problem Solving:* These cards are given out in the college classroom using heavy cardboard (4" x 9") with large print—a group of three students can read the short scenario and document comments on paper. I find it effective to construct two cards with the same scenario. This strategy often sparks an interesting dialogue in comparing group decisions.
7. *Board Games:* These board games were constructed in "Project Construct" workshops (St. Louis, Missouri, 1999). We created the board games out of file folders and set them up with the age-old board game concept of moving from the Start spot to the Home spot across the board. There are cards to choose along the way addressing sticky situations in diversity such as...

   > A 3-year-old says to a child near him, "You can't sit by me, my daddy says so."
   >
   > A child says, "Does your color wash off?"

   (Questions are taken from *Anti-Bias Curriculum* by Louise Derman-Sparks.)
8. *Journals:* I have used this approach every semester in my 200-level classes. Each student receives a folded packet of typing paper. This booklet then becomes a dialogue between the individual student and the instructor. This confidential material is a valuable asset to a student's emotional stability.
9. *Debates to Dialogue (verbal exchange):* A dialogue between two students can lead to a discussion or a debate if you divide the physical classroom into two or three sections. Each section gets equal time to present its side of the story. The verbal exchange can be assertive, passionate, but respectful.
10. *Process Drama* (Crumpler, 2000): This informal drama presents opportunities for students to

interact in scenarios. This role playing invites students to be creative in solving problems. Crumpler suggests that students write their own scenario reflecting the problems occurring in the classroom. In providing "scaffolding," the college instructor will actually become involved in the role play. I tried this technique recently in a college classroom. A student and I reenacted a situation that had previously occurred in her center. We opened the classroom up to discussion after our initial presentation.

11. *Comments on an Easel:* As students take their break in college classrooms, they are welcome to add a comment or question to the *comment easel*. This individual response through writing is inviting to the quiet, intrapersonal learner. This technique was introduced to me through "Project Construct" workshops in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1997. Students have written comments such as:

    "You left my group out today." Or
    "Explain cultural pluralism."

    (These statements open up concerns and discussion from many of the students.)

12. *Are We Similar?:* Students are grouped in "twos," and markers, scissors, glue, paper, and clay are handed out. The students brainstorm to discover all the similar events in their lives. Each group of two then invents a cooperative product displaying these similarities. These products are then discussed.

Suggested Reading

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Appendix

Director Survey Draft

Please complete this survey. The CCE 210 class at RCC will be compiling the results of this survey to make decisions as to what families are needing this community. We will share the results with you.

For-profit center _____ Not-for-profit center _____
# of enrolled children _____

Infant/Toddler Room #_____infants enrolled
#_____toddlers enrolled

1. Most parents ask for guidance in infant care (suggestions for home life).
   Y N Sometimes
2. Parents want teachers to spend more time with their child.
   Y N Sometimes
3. Parents need more time with teachers for information.
   Y N Sometimes
4. Most parents have a different discipline approach to the "biter" than you do.
   Y N Sometimes
5. Parents want teachers to discipline their child as they do.
   Y N Sometimes

Preschoolers #_____preschoolers (ages 2-5)

1. Most families appear too busy to get involved with your activities.
   Y N Sometimes
2. Families need guidance and **ask** for help. _____% of families
   Y N Sometimes
3. Families need guidance and **do not ask** for help.
   _____% of families
   Y N Sometimes
4. Families attend parent meetings and get-togethers.
   _____% of families
   Y N Sometimes
5. Most parents request information on child's well-being on **daily** basis.
   Y N Sometimes
6. Most parents offer suggestions and help in holiday celebration.
   Y N Sometimes
7. Parents require religious restrictions—holidays are not allowed. #_____of parents
   Example
8. Most parents request that their family traditions be accepted.
   Y N Sometimes

Family traditions/customs accepted in your center:

1. holiday Y N Sometimes
   Example________________________________
2. food Y N Sometimes
   Example________________________________
3. religion Y N Sometimes
   Example________________________________
4. dress Y N Sometimes
   Example________________________________
5. health Y N Sometimes
   Example________________________________

I find parents in our center to be concerned about

____

____

I notice that ______________________parents want to
most few some

be involved with our center activities.

My suggestions for family connection:

I would be willing to sit in a "Director's Forum" December 5, 2000 at 7:00 p.m. in W215 to discuss parents and their connection with child care centers/preschools.

Signature ________________________________
Phone ________________

For questions, call Jean Helm at 000-00000 ext. 000; email:
Address:

Preparing Teachers for the Diverse Classroom: A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

Cheryl W. Van Hook

Abstract

One role of teacher educators may be to facilitate the development of greater intercultural sensitivity among preservice teachers. Teachers need to carefully examine their world view to determine whether or not unintentional and subtle biases are promoted. Therefore, it is vital that teacher educators have an awareness of these stages of personal growth related to intercultural sensitivity. This paper discusses the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), which identifies issues that may be important to individuals at each developmental level. The DMIS has six stages that are used to describe the increasingly complex cognitive structures used to view the diverse world. As one's experience of cultural difference becomes more sophisticated, one's competence in intercultural relationships is strengthened. The world view of each stage may be identified by specific behaviors and attitudes. The first three DMIS stages are ethnocentric; the second three are ethnorelative. Although there has been minimal research conducted on how to alter teachers' attitudes and behaviors toward minority groups, the DMIS provides a developmental model that, along with the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)—a self-assessment tool—may be used with preservice teachers to assess the effectiveness of course content and methodology.

Today's teachers must be prepared to enter the increasingly diverse classroom. By the year 2000, children of color will constitute one-third of all students enrolled in public schools, and it is projected that by the year 2020 this figure will increase to 40% (Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 1996). Acknowledgment of these changing demographics has resulted in a great deal of attention focused on how to best prepare preservice teachers for entrance into the diverse classroom. Although the expanding populations of children of color reflect a significant change, diversity is not limited to racial composition. Changing family composition, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, religion, and the varied abilities of children also have an effect on society's expectation of what should be included in the school experience (Garibaldi, 1992). Interestingly, as the population of children is becoming more diverse, teachers entering the profession continue to reflect majority culture (Villegas, 1991). Therefore, the culture of teachers will contrast with the culture of students they teach. This realization is important because what teachers say, perceive, believe, and think can support or impair students (Nel, 1992). Beliefs influence how teachers may teach (Kagan, 1992) and how they understand multiculturalism (Sleeter, 1992).

Diversity and Teacher Preparation Programs

University early childhood teacher preparation programs should provide students with the information and experiences necessary for successful employment in the increasingly diverse public schools. Because there is a greater likelihood that teachers will be working with students whose cultural backgrounds differ greatly from their own (Dilworth, 1992; Fox & Gay, 1995), it is of great importance that teachers become aware of individual cultural perspectives and that they have an opportunity to reflect on various forms of diversity. However, some research suggests that there is reason for concern in terms of preservice early childhood teacher preparation and multicultural education (Fuller, 1999). There is a growing concern that teachers are not prepared or able to apply the National Standards of Academic Excellence in an equitable manner to all students (Bennett, 1995). A report from the National Center for Education Statistics (1999) found that only 20% of teachers expressed confidence in working with children from diverse backgrounds.

There is a range of research focusing on the preparation of teachers to work in multicultural settings (Artiles & McClafferty, 1998; Nieto, 2000; Sleeter, 1992). Studies suggest that most early childhood teacher education programs prepare undergraduate students for working effectively with one socioeconomic group, the middle class, and with the mainstream culture (Cannella & Reiff, 1994; Gollnick & Chinn, 1998). This form of educational preparation overlooks a number of diverse populations and fails to challenge a teacher's beliefs and attitudes that have developed as a result of membership in the mainstream culture. As a result, a number of teacher educators have proposed programs that will prepare students for working with diverse populations (Harrington & Hathaway, 1995; Noel, 1995; Shade, 1995).

The purpose of this paper is not to outline a specific curriculum or methodology for use with preservice teachers in a diversity course. Rather, this paper will describe a developmental model depicting stages of cultural sensitivity. The model will provide a framework for understanding the cognitive patterns and socioemotional reactions an individual holds based on a diverse background and previous life experiences. This perspective-taking strategy will be termed a world view to encompass each developmental domain that is integrated into the unique viewpoint. An individual's world view is based on the individual's experience of cultural difference. It is the individual's method of construing an event or experience that defines a world view. How one may construe and define a series of events provides the creation of a world view. In this regard, the model is phenomenological.

Using the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity to Assess Growth among Preservice Teachers

A teacher's world view may be understood by applying the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). The DMIS is a model of six stages, created by Milton Bennett (1986), used to describe the increasingly more complex cognitive structures used to view the diverse world. Bennett's (1986) model was based on observations and interactions with individuals as they learned to become more competent intercultural communicators. The model defines culture as any group with a set of similar constructs. Therefore, the intent of the model is not limited to racial, cultural, and ethnic diversity. Rather, all forms of diversity and differences among individuals may be included in this definition.

The DMIS stages may be used to assess the level of cultural competency and sensitivity among preservice teachers enrolled in diversity and anti-bias courses in teacher preparation programs. Each student will enter the course with a different background and set of cultural experiences. In addition, students will also differ in their readiness to change and consider diversity issues. However, each student has the potential to develop during the course. Being aware of the developmental progression of student conceptions as a previous world view becomes obsolete and the student adopts a new viewpoint is important for teacher educators. An understanding of the struggles and questions of the student will help identify the type of activities and experiences that will be beneficial for the development of a less biased world view.

The DMIS provides a framework of increasingly more complex cognitive structures. Although each stage may be identified by specific behaviors and attitudes, the DMIS should not be viewed as a developmental framework of changes in attitude and behavior. Each stage has a world view that is distinct from all others and has a set of characteristics, including attitudes and behaviors, that is consistent with a specific world view. A world view may be compared to a lens that is used for looking at the world. How one perceives and interprets events determines the response.

The six stages of the DMIS represent an ordinal scale in which each stage is characterized by increasing sensitivity to cultural difference. As one's experience of cultural difference becomes more complex, one's competence in intercultural relationships is strengthened. The first three DMIS stages are ethnocentric (i.e., one's own culture is experienced as central to the understanding of others). The second three stages are ethnorelative (i.e., one's own culture is experienced within the context of other cultures).

Intercultural sensitivity is conceptualized as a continuum ranging from an ethnocentric perspective to a more ethnorelative world view. Although the model implies a developmental progression in an individual's awareness and understanding of cultural difference, "it does not assume that progression through the stages is one-way or permanent" (Bennett, 1993, p. 27). However, "each stage is meant to characterize a treatment of cultural difference that is fairly consistent for a particular individual at a particular point of development . . ." (Bennett, 1993, p. 27).

Ethnocentric Stages of Intercultural Development

An ethnocentric orientation involves the interpretation of events and behaviors from one's own cultural viewpoint. The ethnocentric stages, based on a predominant monocultural perspective, are viewed as a way to avoid cultural difference by denying the existence of differences, by using defenses against difference, or by minimizing the importance of difference (Bennett, 1993).

Denial. The first stage of ethnocentrism, denial, reflects beliefs that there are no real differences among people from different cultures. Individuals in the stage of denial experience their own culture as the only real one. Consideration of other cultures does not occur because proximity to differences is avoided physically or psychologically. There are two ways that an individual can maintain a sense of denial: *isolation* or *separation.* Isolation, either physical or social, from people who are different can permit the reinforcement of a selective perception in which an individual sees only those events he or she wants to see and does not see what the individual is not accustomed to observing. Another form of denial, separation, is more typical. These individuals may have "the intentional erection of physical or social barriers to create distance from cultural difference" (Bennett, 1986). Individuals who have distanced themselves from cultural differences among groups have acknowledged the existence of differences; however, they are likely to view differences with a degree of suspicion. An individual working on issues in the stage of denial is most comfortable with the familiar, as he or she may seek out others who are culturally similar, and is not motivated to encounter cultural differences (Bennett, 1993). The developmental task for a denial profile is to acknowledge cultural differences that have not been observed previously (Hammer & Bennett, 1998).

Defense. In the stage of defense, one's own culture is experienced as the one true culture. For individuals in this stage, cultural differences are not merely viewed with suspicion, rather differences are considered a threat to one's identity and self-esteem. An individual may defend against differences that may be perceived as threatening through three ways: *denigration, superiority,* and *reversal.* Denigration is a reaction by which the individual responds to differences by a negative judgment. For example, there is a value-based judgment in which an action is termed as negative solely to devalue the inherent difference. In contrast, superiority is used to have a positive evaluation of one's own culture without overtly denigrating another cultural group. Reversal, although uncommon, is a method used to devalue one's own culture as a way to demonstrate superiority of another culture (Bennett, 1993). The developmental task for a defense profile is to increase tolerance of differences and to become cognizant of the similarities among people of various cultures (Hammer & Bennett, 1998).

Minimization. The third ethnocentric stage, minimization, is characterized by attempts to overgeneralize similarities between one's self and other cultures. Differences are diminished and considered inconsequential. There are two forms of minimization: *physical universalism* and *transcendent universalism.* Physical universalism views all cultural differences as mere biological deviations. Transcendent universalism views all individuals as the product of one transcendent and universal entity. The minimization world view decreases the importance of differences that exist between individuals of various cultures. For individuals dealing with cultural difference from a minimization perspective, differences are not viewed as threatening. There is a belief that there are universal values that apply to all people; however, these values may be projected from one's own culture (Bennett, 1993). The developmental task for a minimization profile is to continue learning about one's own culture and to avoid projecting that culture onto the experience of others (Hammer & Bennett, 1998).

Ethnorelative Stages of Intercultural Development

An ethnorelative perspective is based on "the assumption that cultures can only be understood relative to one another and that particular behavior can only be understood within a cultural context" (Bennett, 1993, p. 46). The ethnorelative stages are viewed as a way to seek out cultural difference by understanding the importance of difference, by altering one's own perspective to take into account the perspective of others, or by integrating the importance of differences into one's own identity.

Acceptance. The first stage of the ethnorelative stages, acceptance, has a fundamental difference from previous stages—the acknowledgment that differences exist, are important, and should be respected. There are two forms of acceptance: (1) *respect for behavioral differences,* including an acceptance of verbal and nonverbal behavior, and (2) *respect for value difference,* including an acceptance of various world views that are underlying most variations in behavior. Acceptance is founded on a fundamental difference in world view. In other words, the individual understands that to respect differences found in another culture requires an ability to access a different world view (Bennett, 1993). The developmental task for an acceptance profile is to look at "the world through the lens of a different world view while maintaining your own commitments to values" (Hammer & Bennett, 1998, p. 39).

Adaptation. The second ethnorelative stage, adaptation, is based on a proactive effort to use one's knowledge about cultural differences to improve relationships with people who are culturally different. To accomplish this task, the individual does not merely adopt a different set of cultural beliefs and behaviors to the exclusion of one's own beliefs, values, and behaviors. Rather, this task involves the integration of other cultural beliefs and behaviors to one's own cultural perspective. Typically, adaptation is based on a form of empathy in which one is able to experience events differently from the experiences of one's own culture. Adaptation may also involve an internalization of two cultural frameworks, termed *pluralism.* In pluralism, the individual experiences events in a new way based on the integration of two cultural patterns. In addition, this individual may use skills or behaviors from either cultural framework that will be most beneficial to the current situation. Empathy differs from pluralism in that empathy involves a moment in which the individual considers an alternate cultural pattern, whereas pluralism involves a more complete and permanent world view (Bennett, 1993). The developmental task of a cognitive adaptation profile, the equivalent to the DMIS stage of adaptation, is "to link your cognitive ability to other aspects of your behavior, with the goal of generating 'natural' behavior in more than one cultural context" (Hammer & Bennett, 1998, p. 43).

Integration. The third ethnorelative stage, integration, is the weaving of "disparate aspects of one's identity into a new whole while remaining culturally marginal" (Bennett, 1986). Individuals in this stage have the ability to communicate effectively with many cultural groups. The developmental task of the behavioral adaptation profile, corresponding to the DMIS stage of integration, is to effectively manage any identity issues that may be the result of altering behavior to correspond to various cultures (Hammer & Bennett, 1998).

Using the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity to Prepare Teachers for Diverse Classrooms

As teacher educators plan curriculum to prepare preservice teachers for entrance into the diverse classroom, an awareness of developmental stages that students may encounter along the way can be helpful. As students progress from one stage to the next, a new set of questions, beliefs, attitudes, and values will become apparent. Derman-Sparks and Phillips (1997) created a developmental approach to teaching a racism and human development course. Goals of the course included the adoption of an anti-racist consciousness and behavior. Four phases were identified that seemed to reflect student growth and the development of anti-biased beliefs, attitudes, and values: conflict, disequilibrium, transformation, and activism. These phases outline the progressive steps one takes in order to change a previously held world view. In order to move from one stage of the DMIS to the next, individuals will likely experience each of the phases identified by Derman-Sparks and Phillips (1997).

The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity provides an individualized way to assess and monitor student learning. Upon enrollment in a course, students could be assessed with an instrument, the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), correlating with the DMIS. Scores on the IDI would reflect the stage at which a student has issues to resolve before progressing to the next stage. Assessing an entire class would have the added benefit of discovering central issues that need to receive attention. It would not be expected that all students would have similar issues. Rather, students would benefit from exposure to a range of belief systems.

Concluding Remarks

Although there has been minimal research conducted on how to alter teachers' attitudes and behaviors toward minority groups, the DMIS provides a developmental model that may be used with preservice teachers to assess the effectiveness of course content and methodology. There are a number of curricula that have been proposed for use in diversity awareness and anti-bias education; however, little empirical data exist for evaluation of these models. The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), a self-assessment instrument, was developed by Hammer and Bennett (1998) to measure the six orientations toward intercultural sensitivity outlined in Bennett's (1986, 1993) developmental model. The IDI may be used as a pre-test and post-test for assessing the effectiveness of a new curriculum.

The IDI may also increase self-awareness of level of intercultural sensitivity for each individual. For students taking a course in diversity, this information may be provided at the onset of the course in order to permit individualized feedback about a student's orientation toward cultural differences. For educators teaching a diversity course, scores on the IDI may provide a group profile of a class. This feedback may assist in the development of course curricula that are suited to students' needs and levels of development. The process of making a profile will also direct students' attention to diverse cultural orientations and will provide a starting point for students to begin the journey from not being aware of cultural differences to embracing these differences. Although cultural sensitivity transformation will not occur instantaneously, awareness of the stages along the way will assist teacher educators in better planning the journey.

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A Historical Case Study on Interagency Collaboration for Culturally Diverse Immigrant Children and Families

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Abstract

To meet the needs of immigrant children and their families, educators can collaborate with community agencies. This paper discusses the International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit, an agency that has historically addressed the needs of immigrants by collaborating with schools and other community agencies. The paper first describes the history and philosophy of the Institute and women's educational programs offered by the Institute. Next, interagency collaborations of the Institute are discussed, specifically collaborations with (1) public schools, (2) social services and communication agencies, (3) government agencies, and (4) industry and business. Finally, the effectiveness of the Institute is discussed using multiple definitions of interagency collaboration.

The immigrant population of the United States is increasing dramatically: Fix and Zimmermann (1993) state that "immigrants now account for 35 percent of the net annual population increase in the United States; immigrants and their children account for more than 50 percent.... the number of first- and second-generation immigrants ages 5 to 14 ... will almost double in the next 20 years and will account for more than half of the increase in that population cohort" (p. 18).

As a result of this increased immigration, a large number of culturally and linguistically diverse children are entering public schools. (For further details on recent immigration in the United States and globally, see Bhavnagri, 2001.) Many of these children do not speak English or have limited proficiency in English. Furthermore, their families' parenting goals, child-rearing practices, and peer and school socialization expectations may differ from those of mainstream Americans of European descent (Patel, Power, & Bhavnagri, 1996). Thus, teachers are being challenged to address the needs of these children and their families.

Currently, educators and other practitioners are asked to be culturally sensitive and knowledgeable about the diverse backgrounds of the children with whom they work (Bhavnagri & Gonzalez-Mena, 1997; Gonzalez-Mena & Bhavnagri, 2000, 2001). Meeting the needs of children who come from so many countries and speak so many languages is no small task.

To further complicate the matter, teachers are asked to perform multiple roles in the classroom (Bhavnagri & Vaswani, 1999). They have to be social workers, health personnel, nutritionists, and inclusive teachers; work with families and communities; design a high-quality curriculum; be accountable to multiple stakeholders through students' performance assessment; and address state and national standards. Given these daunting tasks, educators need to avail themselves of multiple resources to help them meet the needs of immigrant families, and they will need to know about existing community agencies that are culturally sensitive to and supportive of these families. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the value of agencies and institutions working in synchrony to support the lives of new immigrants.

There is empirical evidence to suggest that home-school partnerships that include community involvement are effective in bringing about school reform, professional development of teachers, and, most importantly, students' academic success (e.g., Comer, 1997; Epstein, 1995, 1996; Weiner, 1993). Scholarship also indicates that interagency collaboration is essential with populations who have special needs (e.g., Roberts, Rule, & Innocenti, 1998). When scholars discuss special needs, they typically focus on children who are physically, socially, intellectually, or emotionally challenged; however, less is written about children who have special needs because they are immigrants. Scholars in the field of bilingual education and English as a second language do focus on immigrant children; however, they typically focus on the development of curriculum within the classroom to enhance students' language competencies (e.g., Rong & Preissle, 1998). Very little is written about how educators and schools can collaborate with community agencies to support the needs of these immigrant children and their families.

In other words, those who advocate for interagency collaboration do not typically address its importance for immigrant populations, and those who advocate for immigrant populations do not typically discuss the importance of interagency collaboration. We will therefore discuss a case study of one such agency—the International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit—that has historically addressed the needs of immigrants by collaborating with schools and other community agencies. Because this agency has also been referred to elsewhere as "The International Institute," "The International Institute of Detroit," and "The Detroit International Institute," we will use similar terminology. This case study is primarily based on the archival data titled *International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit Records (1919-1981)* (IIMDR) at the Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan.

Creation of the International Institute in Detroit

History and Philosophy

The International Institute movement began under the leadership of the YWCA. Edith Terry Bremer, who was a social welfare and settlement house worker, established the first Institute in New York City in 1910. "Its purpose was to assist newly arrived and second generation immigrant girls and women by providing English classes, recreational and club activities, and assistance in dealing with housing, employment, naturalization, and other problems" (Mohl, 1982b, p. 118). The YWCA opened a Department of Immigration and Foreign Communities at the end of World War I to provide social services by forming International Institutes in industrial cities that had large ethnic populations. Thus, some 55 Institutes were started in many cities; the International Institute in Detroit was founded in 1919.

Mohl (1981, 1982a, 1982b) has extensively studied Bremer's contribution to International Institutes. He views her philosophy as insightful, visionary, and relevant even today. For example, Bremer noted that because of America's involvement in World War I, the American public had a schizophrenic response to immigrants. She noted that, on the one hand, many Americans viewed immigrants with suspicion as "foreigners" and wanted to have nothing to do with them. On the other hand, many Americans advocated active involvement on their own part as well as the immigrants' part to make sure they joined the fabric of American society. According to Bremer, Americans rejected immigrants because of ignorance and their "arrogant assumption that everything American was intrinsically superior to anything foreign" (Mohl, 1982a, p. 39). She further stated that there was fear and hate fanned by war, which created a sharp division between immigrants and nonimmigrants.

Given this problem, her solution was to have a philosophy and a policy of cultural pluralism for the International Institutes. It was a conscious venture on her part to promote what she called "a new democracy" and "a new social class of mankind," where individuals could find similarities that transcended nationality and race. She stated that there is equal worth in all races. The International Institute's response to this issue was to attempt to validate the original cultures with Folk Festivals. Institute personnel believed that such festivals would provide public recognition of parents that would engender added respect from their children.

Women's Educational Programs

Mohl (1982a) reports that the YWCA first focused on the education of women, especially women who had migrated from small towns and farms to industrial cities such as Detroit. The local YWCA workers would receive these newcomers at the railroad station and provide them with career education, such as typing, shorthand, and bookkeeping, so that they could find what they considered "respectable employment." Additionally, as a Christian organization, they gave these women regular religious education through sermons and services. The YWCA workers believed that this evangelical preaching helped these women maintain their virtue amid the temptations of an evil city.

During the early 20th century, these YWCAs were awakened to the Women's Movement, resulting in a paradigm shift in their approach to education for women. They became interested in women as women. As a result, their educational approach shifted beyond moral uplifting to social activism in areas that affected women, such as public health, industrial and labor reform legislation, suffrage and women's rights, temperance, the peace movement, and political reform. It is worth noting here that during that era women were legally barred from voting. It was in this spirit of activism that the YWCA began the International Institute to work with foreign-born women. Thus, when the Institutes began, their focus was primarily on educating immigrant women—from a social activism perspective.

Typically, these Institutes hired foreign-born multilingual women and girls who could communicate with the immigrant women and girls in their native languages. These teachers were called "nationality workers." They taught English in the immigrant's native language as well as in English. While the Institute held to its philosophy of ethnic consciousness and cultural pluralism, it did not hesitate to promote the teaching and learning of English. The International Institute's archival records state that "a knowledge of English will do away with one of the most important impediments in the path of the foreign born. It will enable the immigrant worker to be better understood, for the language handicap added to the lack of industrial training makes the adjustment from the quiet farms of Europe to the roaring factories of Detroit a thousand percent more difficult" (Box 3, Folder 22, IIMDR). Because the teachers and learners had similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds, a rapport was established during the teaching-learning process. Originally, these classes were small and informal and were held in the immigrants' homes or in neighborhood nationality halls, because the immigrant women were reluctant to attend formal classes and their husbands did not want them to venture too far from home. The nationality workers, knowing their adult learners, integrated educational activities along with social and recreational gatherings in these informal household settings. Eventually, as the instruction in English became more formalized, regular classes were held at the Institute. These formal classes were eventually opened up to men as well.

The International Institutes paid great attention to what was labeled "the second-generation problem" or set of tensions that developed between American-born children and their immigrant parents (Mohl, 1981). Because the YWCA sponsored the Institutes at this time, the mother-daughter relationship received the most attention (Box 1, Folder 29, IIMDR). Girls had to simultaneously adjust to employment, new independence, and financial obligations to their birth families while facing a conflict of cultures in an industrial setting. The 1920 census indicated that second-generation girls were employed as follows: 30% in manufacturing, 10% in trade, 12% in professional service, 16% in domestic and personal care occupations, and 26% in clerical jobs (Box 3, Folder 19, IIMDR).

The archival data stated that the typical problems of adolescence were now compounded by conflicting cultures, standards of conduct, and economic conditions (Box 3, Folder 19, IIMDR). The International Institute in Detroit, therefore, hosted Mother-Daughter Weeks, where mothers from various nationality groups demonstrated to their daughters their traditional crafts and ethnic customs and then explained the reasons behind them. One year, this event was judged so successful that it was extended into a second week (Box 3, Folder 19, IIMDR).

The Institute's archival data state that "special classroom work with women is given important recognition in the Detroit Public Evening School system" (Box 3, Folder 15, IIMDR). In 1927, there were 35 such classes in 25 centers with a total enrollment of 575. Sessions were held in the afternoon and taught by the same teachers who conducted the evening classes. Passage of the Cable Act that allowed women to become U.S. citizens independently, rather than as adjuncts of their husbands, stimulated class attendance (Box 3, Folder 15, IIMDR).

Interagency Collaborations of the International Institute in Detroit

Public School Collaboration

Immigrants by the 1920s were concentrated in cities in the North and Midwest, such as Detroit. Pound (1940) reports that between 1910 and 1920, Detroit's population increased 111%, from 465,766 to 993,678. Child labor laws and compulsory school attendance were more strictly enforced in the North and Midwest, including in Detroit, than in the South (Box 3, Folder 19, 1928, IIMDR). The International Institute in Detroit collaborated with public schools to offer special classes in English for the foreign-born children. In 1927, there were as many as 17 such classes, reaching out to 416 children who probably spoke no English or had a very limited knowledge of it. The Institute's archival data report that "special attention was given to these foreign children's classes in order to give them in as short a time as possible sufficient knowledge of English to grade them in their proper grades. Many of these children were new arrivals in the country, and some very interesting experiments were carried out with these children" (Box 3, Folder 15, 1928, IIMDR). Regretfully, the archival documents do not describe these "interesting experiments." We assume that perhaps the teachers used some innovative strategies for teaching English at a rapid rate in order to help the immigrants catch up with their peers. These were the efforts they reported for reaching the first-generation immigrant children.

Because the archives do not mention teaching English to second-generation immigrant children, educators perhaps had to invest comparatively less in teaching them English. They only report that they had a very high volume of these second-generation youth enrolled in school. However, their school census tabulators were less concerned with numerical enrollment data and were, instead, more interested in "ways of understanding and serving the child from the 'foreign' home" (Box 3, Folder 19, 1930, IIMDR).

The two innovative strategies they introduced to reach out to these children were the introduction of the visiting teacher program and provision of vocational counselors. Both of these services were already a part of the public schools with which they were collaborating. They believed that these two approaches "while of great value to all children are of inestimable value to American born children of foreign parentage" (Box 3, Folder 19, 1930, IIMDR). They were not referring to classroom teachers doing home visits. Instead, these teachers' primary job was to visit homes and communities, and to strengthen interagency collaborations, for the well-being of children and families. (For further details regarding the home-community visits by visiting teachers, kindergarten teachers, and settlements workers for diverse populations, see Bhavnagri and Krolikowski, 2000.)

It is unclear from the archival data if the Institute provided high school education exclusively for first-generation immigrant adolescents. However, based on our readings, we conjecture that the high school education that the Detroit Public Schools offered to all Detroit residents in the evenings in collaboration with the Institute was most likely attended by these adolescent immigrants as well. We think this collaboration played out in the following manner: The Detroit Public Schools continued teaching their formal and prescribed academic curriculum; however, when they felt that their high school students needed additional education in English and in preparation for citizenship, they would recommend that they also attend courses in English and citizenship that were offered at the International Institute of Detroit. Another possible scenario could be that adolescents who were initially interested only in the survival skills of English proficiency and citizenship preparation were eventually encouraged by the International Institute of Detroit to further their education and take a high school diploma in the Detroit Public Schools. Thus, through collaboration, they were optimizing their available resources and attempting to provide not fragmented services, but seamless services—an approach that is recommended even today (Rosenblum, DiCecco, Taylor, & Adelman, 1995).

Social Services and Communication Agencies Collaboration

The International Institute in Detroit had a formal and yet a very close relationship with the Michigan State Employment Service to help immigrants who had language difficulties find jobs. They provided encouragement, which many immigrants needed (Sickels, 1951). The Institute received referrals from many public and private social service agencies, such as the United Community Services Nationality Department, Veterans Administration, United Foundations, Red Cross, Catholic Charities, Visiting Teachers, Women's Hospital Social Services, American Cancer Society, Salvation Army, Methodist Children's Home, County Department of Social Welfare, Detroit Orthopedic Clinic, Traveler's Aid, Grosse Pointe Woods Community Club, Legal Aid Bureau, and Polish Relief Organization (Kwitkowsky, 1955).

When the individual cases were referred by these agencies, the "intake recording" (the initial data gathering through interviews) included the ethnic origin of the clients. This recording was done because the International Institute workers were required to provide services based on the identity and cultural patterns of living within a specific ethnic group. They did not label the ethnicity by nationality because particular ethnic groups could be living in more than one country (e.g., Armenians could be from Turkey or Greece). Furthermore, often a country would have many subcultures, and therefore it was necessary to specify their ethnicity (e.g., immigrants from what once was Yugoslavia were specifically labeled as Serbian, Croatians, Slovenians, Macedonians, Bulgarians, or Montenegrins).

According to Mostert (1998), successful school-community collaboration necessitates understanding the many diverse kinds of families, their belief systems, and their ethnic and cultural backgrounds. He further states that there are five positive outcomes from gathering information on family diversity: (1) we gain the family's perspective; (2) we become acquainted with their cultural uniqueness, which then helps us to offer culturally sensitive intervention; (3) we eliminate any biases and mistaken impressions; (4) we increase our possibilities of efficient action; and (5) we increase the opportunities of the families to interact with us. Thus, the in-depth individual case recording done by the Detroit International Institute perhaps led to these positive outcomes.

The social services that were provided by the International Institute were related to the Immigration and Naturalization processes; educational and vocational guidance; personal, family, and marital adjustment; physical illnesses; and mental illnesses (Kwitkowsky, 1955). At times, they provided these social services directly to their clients, while at other times, they served as mediators between the newcomers and various agencies. For example, Mohl (1982b) reports that International Institutes collaborated with the Red Cross, and then Red Cross training was given to immigrant mothers and girls at the Institutes.

The International Institutes of America—which were offshoots of the YWCA—used to also work with communication agencies, such as the radio and the foreign-language press in order to reach out to pockets of immigrant communities in urban areas (Mohl, 1982a). They used the media to publicize their activities and promote their educational goals. The workers at the Institutes translated materials related to legal subjects, unemployment, relief, housing, and other topics of importance to immigrants. Many International Institutes also put out their own monthly newsletters, pamphlets, and similar publications.

Government Agencies Collaboration

The Detroit International Institute closely, actively, continuously, and effectively worked with the local consuls to assist them with a variety of concerns and challenges related to the immigration process. Specifically, the institutional archival documentation reports that

> The local Consuls now are discovering our usefulness and are referring cases to us.... We handled immigration problems; deportation; naturalization; interpretation; investigation of fraudulent practices; application for visaes; domestic and social relationship; wage claims; simple legal matters; taxes; an unusual amount of unemployment; problems involving lost citizenship through marriage under the old law, where husband has acquired citizenship and the woman is temporarily without a

> country; permits to reenter the United States; problems of immigrants entering to and from Canada either to gain residence here or a change of immigration status; cases of admissions to the United States under the provisions for students, visitors and agriculturists; cases of families being prevented from reuniting for months and years; children detained at Ellis Island and other ports and separated from parents and guardians because of illness; the most common of which is trachoma; and many other problems arising from the intricacies of the immigration and naturalization laws. (Box 3, Folder 15, 1928, IIMDR)

The International Institute of Detroit reports that their Alien Free Information Bureau assisted 10,430 cases or individuals with personal problems and rendered a total of 19,662 services to these individuals during the year 1927 (Box 3, Folder 15, IIMDR). They reported that they were especially inundated with cases of problems of family reunification caused by the new restrictive immigration law of July 1924. The husbands and fathers who had immigrated before the new law were unable to unite with their wives, children, and elderly parents who they had left behind in their countries of origin (Sickels, 1945; Box 3, Folder 15, IIMDR). "It was not possible for these men to foresee the provisions of the new law nor that the quotas for so many of the countries would be so greatly reduced" (Box 3, Folder 15, IIMDR).

Thus, they helped immigrant children and families with the most central of their concerns regarding their survival in the United States. Maslow states in his hierarchy of needs that the basic physiological needs of food, clothing, and shelter are primary for survival. In the case of immigrants, these basic physiological needs as well as their psychological needs were contingent upon their legal status in the United States.

Perhaps parents today who are in similar situations are utilizing their psychological energy and time to address their legal status. It is therefore no surprise that they may not be actively involved in volunteering in the classroom, being on advisory boards, or maintaining regular communication with the school. First, teachers need to understand that these stresses and strains often prohibit parents from participating in school activities. Second, if these new immigrant families are so fortunate as to have close kin who can assume some of their parental roles in the schools, teachers should welcome, support, and truly accept the kin as much as the parent.

The International Institute of Detroit expanded its existing governmental collaborations from national to state and local levels. For example, they stated that they enjoyed the same "fine cooperation and spirit of helpfulness from the government representatives in Detroit having to do with immigration, emigration, deportation, and naturalization of aliens" (Box 3, Folder 15, IIMDR). A second example is that they proposed their intention to work with the Congress to enact temporary measures to alleviate the suffering of separated families caused by the new restrictive immigration law of 1924, without modifying the principle of restrictive immigration. A third example is from the 1950s. At that time, the International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit worked with the Michigan Employment Security Commission and provided employment counseling as well as vocational services to the immigrants who were admitted under the Displaced Persons Act of 1946 (Frontczak, 1953). Frontczak (1953) explained the reason for this collaboration as follows: "The cooperation in this endeavor between the tax supported agency and the private agency grew out of the separate strivings of the two facilities to serve the same group of people, with recognition on both sides that neither was able to provide the best possible service alone" (p. 63). Thus, these pieces of evidence suggest that they collaborated closely with government agencies and representatives in legislative advocacy for newcomers.

Collaborations with Industries and Businesses

The International Institute of Detroit worked in close partnership with industries by regularly distributing publicity materials about the Detroit Public Evening Schools, including their locations and course offerings. They offered this information at the beginning of each semester in September and January. The archival data of 1928 (Box 3, Folder 15, IIMDR) reported that during the previous year, "121 industries responded and pledged themselves to assist in conveying the message of opportunity offered by those schools to their foreign-born employees." They further noted that "year in and year out response from Detroit's major industries is exceedingly helpful and reassuring." As a result of this collaboration, in 1927, the industries sent 8,425 of their workers to study in the evening high schools and 5,324 workers to study in the evening elementary schools. Their collaboration resulted in a total evening enrollment of 33,269 high school students and 24,573 elementary students. Twenty-five percent of the high school students and 75% of the elementary students were foreign born. The teachers of these classes were especially trained to teach English at the elementary grade level.

The citizenship teachers who prepared students for naturalization were nearly all hired from the civics departments of the day public schools. Thus, the collaboration between industries and the Institute was further supported by the public schools, by their providing space and qualified staff. Kwitkowsky (1955) reports that the Institute also collaborated with business organizations, such as the banks and insurance companies.

Conclusion: Effective Interagency Collaboration

In 1992, the United States General Accounting Office reported that linking services with families at risk appeared to be more effective than reform efforts (Roberts, Rule, & Innocenti, 1998). Thus, it is now recognized that we need to look beyond education in the classroom and start examining other components, such as social support services, to maximize the potentials of poor urban children, many of whom are immigrants. Federal legislation has therefore begun to place a higher priority on linking education with other support services that help children develop physically, socially, mentally, and emotionally (Lopez, Torres, & Norwood, 1998). The Detroit International Institute linked social services and education for children and families who were immigrants and therefore at risk. They addressed the priority of serving the whole child through collaboration—a strategy that is recommended currently. Furthermore, their services were in alignment with what is being recommended in modern times by the United States General Accounting office.

According to Aguirre (1995), today's "comprehensive, integrated services for children" should be family focused, broad based but flexible, involving major stakeholders in addressing solutions, and, finally, improving communitywide conditions. Given this definition, it is safe to say that the Detroit International Institute attempted to provide family-focused, comprehensive, and integrated service by collaborating with all the major stakeholders in the community to improve the conditions of immigrant children and families.

Furthermore, according to Nelson (2000), the Casey Foundation has designed a framework for understanding and strengthening America's current, vulnerable families. Their framework recommends that our society provide (1) economic opportunities that help families secure jobs and build assets, (2) social networks that offer help and promote positive relationships, and (3) high-quality and accessible formal supports and services that families can trust. This historical research indicates that the International Institute of Detroit collaborated with all the stakeholders mentioned by Nelson. As a result, this Institute historically was able to provide the components in the Casey Foundation framework.

Now, according to Wimpfheimer, Bloom, and Kramer (1990), there are four principles for effective interagency collaboration: (1) agencies mutually recognize a common problem; (2) agencies consider the issue as sufficiently high priority for them to collaborate and take action; (3) agencies have the authority, influence, and the resources to address their common concerns; and (4) agencies are creative, remain flexible, and combine unconventional ingredients in novel ways to achieve the desired outcomes. This historical case study documents that these four principles were operating and therefore that the Detroit International Institute was effective in collaborating with other agencies to promote the well-being of culturally diverse immigrant children and families by using these principles.

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Roundtable I

Collaborative, Site-Based Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Program

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Abstract

The Collaborative, Site-Based Teacher Preparation Program in Early Childhood has transformed the way that the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Professional Program in Education conducts early childhood teacher preparation. Preservice teachers now engage in performance-based learning in collaboratively supported, community- and public school-based early childhood settings where they learn to work with culturally, linguistically, and ability-diverse young children and their families. Course content is taught onsite or delivered through online core modules, and competency acquisition is supported by field-based faculty mentors who work closely with students and cooperating teachers. Seminars give students an opportunity to join together to critically reflect on their experiences and solve problems. Performance-based assessment tools are being developed to measure preservice teacher outcomes. Project outcomes being looked at include: (1) improved preservice student learning and teaching, (2) teachers who are prepared to work with diverse populations, (3) strengthened linkages and improved continuity between child care facilities and public schools, and (4) a teacher preparation model that can be applied at all levels of teacher education.

National standards of academic excellence have been developed as part of President Clinton's 10-point call to action (1997), and every state and every school must establish meaningful standards for what students should master in core subject areas. Many states have completed model academic standards that will serve as rigorous goals for what students should know and be able to do by given times in their education in order to achieve at high levels and be able to meet the challenges of the 21st century. Operating concurrently, many states have also restructured teacher licensing requirements, moving toward broad, competency-based certification categories that include early childhood and away from a "course-for-credit" structure.

Teacher preparation programs, however, are still based predominantly on this traditional course-for-credit model. U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley reported that an incoherent and complicated structure exists for teacher preparation with lax or weakly enforced requirements for entry (Office of Postsecondary Education, 1999). In addition, the vast majority of current teacher preparation models do not take place in environments in which students learn to relate to children and families whose background is different from their own, therefore failing to provide them with the experiences needed to accurately transmit knowledge of other cultures, to develop significant cross-cultural experiences for children, or to reflect thoughtfully on their personal biases and beliefs.

National statistics indicate that families have become increasingly diverse in form, ability, race and ethnicity, culture, and linguistic background. Implementation of the 1997 Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) will see more young children with disabilities included in regular classrooms, as well as statewide assessment programs. Minority youth are the fastest growing segment of the child population, are over-represented among children under 6 living in poverty, and are expected to increase to 38% of children living in poverty by 2010 ("Focus on Teacher Preparation," 1999). The number of children of immigrants alone is expected to rise to 9 million in 2010, representing 22% of the school-age population (Fix & Passel, 1993).

To further compound the issue, most child development research is with white middle-class children, causing teachers frequently to confuse cultural differences with developmental deficits or cultural deprivation. Teachers enter classrooms unprepared to implement a standards-based curriculum that will meet the learning needs of pluralistic student populations in developmentally appropriate ways.

In contrast, "President Clinton's Call to Action for American Education in the 21st Century" (1997) calls on institutions of higher learning to "re-invent teacher preparation." According to Goals 2000, preservice teachers need hands-on training in problem solving, collaborative teaching, and competency-based performance and assessment strategies to support district educational reform goals and raise student achievement. The Children's Defense Fund (1999) reports that to meet the National Education Goals, teacher training must be upgraded in quality to meet the educational needs of *all* students.

The University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Professional Program in Education has been moving toward a teacher preparation model built on collaborative relationships with local school districts to share and combine the experiences of preservice students and seasoned practitioners, and to provide earlier, more extensive, and more relevant field experiences for students in preparation. One of the first initiatives to emerge involves the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, the Green Bay PK-12 School District, the Green Bay School's Head Start Program, and the Fort Howard/Jefferson Family Resource Center, who are committed to working together to develop and implement an exemplary early childhood teacher preparation program.

Statement of the Problem

The 1995 National Education Goals Report, measuring progress toward the National Education Goals through year 2000, focuses on the need to develop family-school-community partnerships to increase family involvement, provide greater continuity between the early childhood and elementary school years, and to ensure that by "the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn" (Goal 1: Ready to Learn). A national survey of kindergarten teachers additionally reports that there is little contact between schools and the providers of pre-kindergarten care and educational services. In response, "President Clinton's Call to Action for American Education in the 21st Century" (1997) has asked for continued expansion of Head Start, family resource, and early childhood programs for disadvantaged children and families and strong community commitments to enhance parental involvement in the early years.

The federal initiative to reform welfare, however, has brought about changing patterns of work that affect families' needs for child care and support. The implementation of Wisconsin's new welfare plan, for example, requires parents to work when their youngest child is 12 weeks old, creates a new category of largely unregulated child care, and reduces the number of young children who can be served in local Head Start, English as a Second Language (ESL), and Title I public half-day preschool programs. In response, full-day programming has become the priority model for federal Head Start funding (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1993), further reducing the number of children receiving services. As a result, 60% of kindergartners in the United States now attend school all day (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2000).

In addition, *Working Woman's* fifth annual study of child care nationwide (1997) reported that there is not enough child care available, and, although Wisconsin ranked in the top 10, no state received the highest rating in any of the categories of commitment, quality, safety, and availability. Low wages for early childhood providers lead to high turnover, making it difficult to attract and retain the well-trained and educated staff that provide a base for high-quality programming. Early childhood education is becoming a top federal and state priority.

Federal, state, and local governments are committing significant funding to improve the quality as well as the quantity of early childhood professionals. Lead teachers in Head Start classrooms are now required to have a minimum of an associate's degree by 2004 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1993), and several states have state-funded scholarship initiatives to support early childhood professional development (e.g., Child Care Scholarship and Bonus

Program under T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood WISCONSIN and North Carolina T.E.A.C.H.). Lawmakers are responding by reviewing the current state of preschool programs and considering legislation to implement programs in public schools for 3- and 4-year-olds, and state licensing agencies are beginning to incorporate early childhood education within broad "generalist" teaching categories and levels.

Early childhood education is a rapidly growing occupational category. In Wisconsin alone, it is reported to be the third fastest growing category between 1997 and 2005. Teacher preparation programs are being pressured to expand the early childhood component of their programs or integrate early childhood competencies across the new teaching categories. The challenge for the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay partnership became twofold: (1) to proactively meet the growing demand for high-quality early childhood teachers in the region, and (2) to "reinvent" early childhood teacher preparation to align standards-based teaching with developmentally appropriate teaching and learning.

The Model

With the help of a three-year Fund to Improve Post Secondary Education (FIPSE) grant and an advisory board composed of representatives from the partnership, the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay set out to develop an innovative, interdisciplinary teacher training model that would prepare preservice teachers to work with culturally, linguistically, and ability-diverse young children and their families, and to provide this training within trusted community settings.

In collaboration with their partners, a series of clinical rotations was developed that provide early childhood preservice teachers with a rich and varied sequence of experiences through which they have multiple opportunities to demonstrate competencies working directly with young children and families from diverse backgrounds. Rotations now include infant/toddler sites, nonprofit child care centers, inclusive child care programs, public and private preschools, Head Start classrooms, and full-day kindergartens. These experiences engage preservice teachers in hands-on professional practice in a workplace environment with opportunities to learn developmentally appropriate practice, engage parents, and learn to respond to the educational needs of limited English proficient, economically disadvantaged, or ability-diverse young children.

Throughout the program, identified competencies are provided through "core" offerings delivered utilizing online technology (WebCT). Seminars at the university give preservice teachers an opportunity to critically reflect on their experiences and discuss issues of concern.

Throughout these planned and sequenced field experiences, competency acquisition is supported by field-based mentoring from a faculty who works closely with students and cooperating teachers. The faculty mentor functions as a coach for preservice students working in pre-kindergarten classrooms, modeling best practice and providing students with ongoing feedback and support. A panel of experts from the region spent a full day generating the duties and tasks that a mentor in early childhood needs to know and be able to do. With no existing models to draw on, the members of the panel generated a virtual analysis of the occupation of "mentor" at the university level. Following verification by an additional 80 professionals from across the state, a detailed job description was developed for the position. The position is being carefully monitored to help define essential tasks in detail, determine if the identified tasks meet the needs of the students on-site, and document the critical role this position plays in the program design.

The faculty mentor and cooperating teachers meet on a weekly basis to reflect and discuss preservice teacher progress; identify knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to improve performance; review and update an Individual Learning Plan (ILP); and select new competencies to be addressed and activities that will be used to demonstrate mastery. Within this context, learning and assessment remain inseparable. As students identify problems and develop competencies to solve problems in the classroom, they assess and describe their own progress and use mentor/cooperating teacher feedback to validate self-performance. Students receive summative evaluations upon completion of each semester and a final formative evaluation at the end of the program. These evaluations are included in their exit portfolio.

Content

A standards-based curriculum, with clearly defined competencies identifying what students should know and be able to do, needed to be designed to ensure preservice teacher proficiency in all applicable standards and content knowledge. The first task was to identify the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that early childhood practitioners should possess so that early childhood course content and class contact hours could be converted into clearly defined competencies. The development of these competencies was guided by the results of a Developing a Curriculum (DACUM) process, in which 14 "experts" in early childhood education representing 300 years of experience spent 2 days under the guidance of a trained facilitator, identifying what students should know and be able to do when they graduate from a 4-year program in early childhood education. Verification was conducted through a statewide survey of 80 additional early childhood professionals. The competencies were then linked to and cross-referenced with the high standards developed by the National Association for the Education for Young Children (NAEYC) and endorsed by the Association of Teacher Education (ATE) and the Council for Exceptional Children, Division of Early Childhood (DEC/CEC), framed by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Standards for Teacher Development and Licensing and performance-based licensure standards, and adapted to respond to the diverse and changing needs of the young children and their families in the Green Bay community.

The eight-course, 22-credit early childhood program sequence was then converted into competency-based outcomes and transformed into online "core" offerings. Students now access core content online while spending 4 to 6 hours a week in a variety of rotating clinical placements.

Core Offerings

Core 1: The History, Philosophy, and Current Programs in Early Childhood (3 credits). This course is computer enhanced. Students attend traditional classroom lectures used in combination with interactive and participatory group discussions and projects in class and online. Eight site visits to community-based early childhood program models are required, and students identify, critique, and evaluate each model. Additionally, students reflect on current issues in the light of historical trends and serve as advocates for change.

Core 2: Observation and Assessment of Young Children (4 credits). Students access content online and spend 4 hours a week in the following rotating clinical placements: an infant/toddler site, a community-based child care center, and a kindergarten classroom. Students observe or assist at developmental assessments and interventions, complete course projects on-site, and return to campus 6 times during the semester to hear presentations, work on computer skills, and reflect on their experiences.

Core 3: Working and Communicating with Families of Young Children (3 credits). This 3-credit core exposes students to the contextual knowledge, skills, and attributes necessary to be successful in a variety of diverse settings working directly with young children and families (e.g., the Multicultural Center of Greater Green Bay, the Fort Howard/Jefferson and the Howe Family Resource Centers, the UW-Green Bay Multicultural Center, the Coalition to Promote Respect). This experiential core was designed so students become involved in school and community programs where they (1) learn and apply the knowledge, skills, and attributes necessary to work collaboratively with families from diverse backgrounds; (2) develop an understanding of and respect for the values and beliefs of families and children who are linguistically, ability, and culturally diverse; (3) learn the skills needed to communicate effectively with these diverse populations; and (4) provide service to families.

Core 4: Curriculum in Early Childhood/Kindergarten. Two 3-credit courses (Curriculum and Program Development in Early Childhood and Teaching Kindergarten: Integrated Curriculum) were combined into this 6-credit curriculum core. The core competencies and performance-based projects were developed and put online by a team of early childhood professionals from the field working collaboratively with university faculty. Students complete two 7-week placements (preschool program, kindergarten classroom), spending 4 hours a week in preassigned classrooms. Students access content online and attend 9 campus-based seminars throughout the semester.

Core 5: Student Teaching. Students complete 4½ weeks in an early childhood classroom, 9 weeks in a full-day kindergarten, and 9 weeks in a grade 1-6 classroom.

The model was to have been implemented with an initial cohort of 16 students in a series of stages over the course of 3 semesters and 2 summers. The first "cohort" admitted to Core 1, however, consisted of 32 students, double the usual enrollment. Growing enrollments may reflect national and state attention to the importance of the early years, as well as interest in a model that responds to the needs of the traditional and nontraditional student.

Evaluation

A plan is developed for each preservice student, identifying individual competencies needed to meet student learner outcomes and the performance-based activities that they will use to demonstrate attainment of those outcomes. The plan is developed in collaboration with a university advisor and reflects the needs, goals, and objectives of the program.

A variety of ongoing performance-based assessment tools and techniques are used to measure student learning outcomes as they are reflected in increased student knowledge and relevant changes in performance. Assessments may include but may not be limited to observational studies, logs or journals, interviews, lesson plans, case studies, role playing/interactive sessions, analyses of teaching situations, teaching vignettes requiring decision making, and videotapes of instructional delivery. Students compile a collection of work samples for inclusion in a culminating portfolio that captures the evolution of the student's ideas and learning and that are used as progress markers for evaluation.

Ongoing monitoring of program effectiveness and student learning is being done through a variety of assessment instruments. Faculty who are teaching content online are asked to document the variety of technological components and strategies used in each core, as well as data on flexibility in the use of the medium to enhance learning. Pre- and post-survey data on technology knowledge, skills, and attitudes have been administered in all core offerings. In each core, students are asked to reflect on how comfortable they are with the online format and how well it works for them in delivering program content. Students are then divided into small groups and asked to identify obstacles that stand in the way of resolving each concern, and to generate student and instructor goals that could minimize or eliminate each concern. At the end of each core, the final evaluation asks each student to evaluate how well these issues and concerns were addressed or resolved. These data are now being entered and analyzed.

Empirical Support for the Model

The design for the Collaborative Site-Based Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Model reflects the results of the empirical research presented in the full report of the American Council on Education Presidents' Task Force on Teacher Education (1999). It shares several characteristics that have been identified in this research in strong teacher education programs: (1) a shared vision of teaching excellence defined within strong relationships with pre-kindergarten through grade-12 schools and community leaders, (2) well-defined standards for practice and performance, (3) a rigorous standards-based core curriculum, (4) the infusion of technology into the curriculum, and (5) an inquiry- and performance-based environment.

Recent school reform initiatives (e.g., Coalition of Essential Schools—Sizer, 1993; Wasley, 1991) support implementation of innovative instruction characterized by higher-order thinking, problem solving, and decision making in which students use scientific methods to explore topics and "construct" new understandings of the material. Typically described as "constructivist" in the reform literature, these recommendations mirror early childhood best practice (Baker, 1993). Advances in the study of the brain, cognition, and development offer new understandings of human learning and now support these "constructivist" approaches to effective classroom practice

(Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999; Resnick & Klopfer, 1989)

Early experiences have now been shown to be critical to later learning (Greenough, Black, & Wallace, 1987; Dawson & Fischer, 1994; Shore, 1997), and recent research suggests that even very young infants possess sophisticated cognitive schemas to explain and organize phenomena around them and begin the development of concepts (Lamb & Sherrod, 1981; Mehler & Fox, 1985). The development of intellectual competence is more than the accumulation of discrete pieces of information. Pedagogical approaches need to integrate three critical elements of deep understanding: (1) factual grounding that is accurate and based on students' prior learning to promote the development of concepts (Mestre, 1994); (2) awareness of the structure of knowledge in a discipline to enhance problem solving through the identification of patterns and principles (Larkin, 1983); and (3) metacognitive or self-monitoring activities to gain insight into and regulate their own thinking and learning processes (Carey, 1996). Learners also need to have opportunities to apply and generalize experiences if they are to make use of what they have learned (Klahr & Carver, 1988) and apply that knowledge appropriately and adaptively (Anderson, Reder, & Simon, 1996; Ericsson & Charness, 1994).

Additionally, the research on the social context of learning (Egan, 1997; Vygotsky, 1978) supports cognition being a social process. The environment needs to support learning by providing a framework of meaningfulness—culture, people, tools, language, symbols—that "encourage connections between learning and one's personal history" (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999). Another theme of cognition as a social process talks of distributed cognition, with research supporting quicker and more effective solutions being reached through collaborative and collegial interaction and modes of inquiry (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999; Brown & Campione, 1994).

The Collaborative Site-Based Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Model operates from within an established university-community partnership whose educational reforms are clearly helping to bridge the gap between research, practice, and policy through the implementation of learning environments that will improve teacher performance and student learning.

Significance

The project represents an important departure from existing practice. The Collaborative Site-Based Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Model responds to the nationwide call for teacher preparation reform by developing and implementing a unique competency-based and technologically relevant model that provides early childhood preservice teachers access to coherent, on-site training from professionals who are integrally connected to the program, the world of work, and the families of the children being served, while continuing to link to the resources of the university. The model is preparing teachers who are committed to and capable of supporting children's learning as it develops over time within real classroom settings, with support in the field, and with opportunities to observe, plan, and apply standards-based curriculum.

The project prepares teachers who are capable of supporting children's learning within the context of diverse family backgrounds. The model prepares preservice teachers for licensure with demonstrated competencies in meeting the needs of young children with diverse abilities and multicultural/ESL backgrounds. Those competencies are learned and assessed within trusted community-based settings where preservice teachers will work with and relate to children and adults from diverse backgrounds and will graduate highly qualified professionals prepared to meet the learning needs of pluralistic student populations.

The project involves learner-centered improvements. The standards-based design of the program reflects its focus on the learner by defining what early childhood preservice teachers will know and be able to do upon successful completion of the program. In addition, it allows for flexibility so that the program sequence can be adapted to match each learner's unique competency needs, supporting the entry of nontraditional students through multiple venues.

The model sustains commitment and enhances learning through extensive feedback and support from peers and professionals through cohort grouping, Individual Learning Plans (ILP), weekly team meetings, on-site faculty mentoring, and reflective seminars. Peer collaboration has been identified as essential to teachers' continued learning (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). Team teaching, mentoring, and formally planned meetings allow for reflection, a productive exchange of ideas, and the development of collegial relationships. Creating learning communities within schools improves preservice student learning and teaching.

The project serves as a teacher preparation model that can be applied at all levels of teacher education. The proposed project has strong potential as a state and national model for preparing teachers at all grade levels to work in urban and rural districts with diverse family patterns, as well as responding to the need to enhance and connect teacher education programs to the wider educational community in ways that are sustainable and cost effective. Its standards-based structure additionally responds to the national call for performance-based licensing requirements.

The project will support a potential articulated professional development continuum with the Wisconsin technical college system. Future efforts will be made to link the online early childhood education sequence to the UW-Green Bay Extended Degree Distance Learning Program to make alternative certification available to child care providers who wish to earn a bachelor's degree through the new $60 million Child Care Scholarship and Bonus Program under T.E.A.C.H Early Childhood WISCONSIN. It will also begin the process of developing an articulated professional development sequence with the Wisconsin Technical System for early childhood professionals that is competency based, allowing interested students, traditional and nontraditional, to be admitted to the program through the Competency-Based Admissions Policy being developed by the UW system.

This project is cost-effective. In a time of shrinking resources, the project provides the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay an opportunity to create a shared agenda for and with students, practitioners, researchers, and policy makers in the community that innovatively and effectively addresses the rapidly changing needs of its families and young children.

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The Inner Voice of the Teacher: The Key to Quality

Naama Zoran

Abstract

This paper discusses how deliberation and critical reflection contribute to the quality of teachers' work. The paper concludes with an example of how deliberation and critical reflection are used to improve practice in a two-year early childhood program, in which early childhood teachers meet every two weeks to discuss and reflect critically on their practice.

> *"Be as you are, search for your own way. Know yourself before searching to know children. . . . Above all you are a child too, and you must know and educate this child first."* (Korchak, 1943)

Reflection and deliberation are two of the most important strategies involved in the teacher's planning process and that contribute to the quality of a teacher's work. Their importance stems from the fact that they reflect the inner processes—emotional and cognitive—that the teacher goes through during the curricular decision-making process. It is interesting that the most important domain that influences teachers' curricular decisions—the emotional domain—is the least acknowledged. This domain will be the focus of this paper. The theoretical framework chosen here combines Schwab's (1966) curricular theory and Brookfield's (1995) "critical reflection" theory.

Deliberation

Schwab's theory focuses on the *deliberation* concept, which is the main strategy for planning and solving curricular problems. Deliberation is a systematic and dynamic process in which there is a search for the best alternative depending on the situation. During this process, the teacher has to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative and decide which choice is the most appropriate given the situation. Deliberation is a personal process that is influenced by teacher beliefs, attitudes, history, and context. The ability to analyze any situation from various points of view will change according to the teacher's openness.

Roby (1985) states that there are factors that could interfere with the deliberation process. He calls those factors habits and says that these behaviors are displayed consciously or unconsciously during any coping situation. The habits reflect a person's preferences or avoidance behaviors. During the process of deliberation, habits can be divided into three categories according to how they interfere with the decision-making process: (1) ignorance or inappropriate reaction to a commonplace situation; (2) expectation of linear progress and resulting difficulty coping with uncertain situations; and (3) choosing a quick solution, jumping to conclusions without comprehensive thinking. The more aware the teacher is of these habits, the more qualitative is the decision-making process.

Critical Reflection

The theory of "critical reflection" was chosen because it emphasizes how crucial *basic assumptions* are in influencing and directing curricular planning processes. Brookfield (1995) defines assumptions as basic guidelines that help us to understand the world and act in accordance with the environments in which we live. He differentiates among three kinds of assumptions:

- *Paradigmatic assumptions*: Basic axioms that construct our world, paradigmatic assumptions are the most basic scripts we create from the messages we get from significant figures in our lives.
- *Prescriptive assumptions*: Based on and widening paradigmatic assumptions, prescriptive assumptions reflect what we think should happen in a certain situation.
- *Causal assumptions*: Based on the other two assumptions, causal assumptions deal with "If...then" issues. Included in what we think should happen in any situation is our knowledge about what will happen if we take one path or another.

The main contribution of critical reflection theory is its focus on one of the most important factors in the decision-making process—teacher awareness. In this process, teachers must distinguish between their own voices and those of authorities and decide which voice to listen to in a given situation. Brookfield (1995) suggests four lenses that could help in this process of critical reflection:

- *Teachers' autobiographies as teachers and learners*: Here we examine our assumptions from two points of view simultaneously: one through our experiences as teachers—trying to understand our choices and responses in different situations—and the other through our experiences as learners—trying to understand how those experiences influence our decisions in class.
- *The eyes of the learners*: By looking at ourselves as our students see us and examining our relationships with them, we try to figure out the meanings that learners give to our actions.
- *The eyes of other teachers*: The way that other teachers look at our practice enables us to discover dimensions that usually are hidden to us. Colleagues provide a mirror that reveals our actions to us, thereby enabling us to reframe our practice.
- *Theoretical basis*: The theoretical background we use is the basis of the critical reflection effort. The more solid and wide the theoretical base, the more options we have.

An Example

At this point, we connect the deliberation and the reflection processes. In our two-year program, we work with a group of early childhood teachers who meet once every two weeks to discuss their beliefs, assumptions, values, emotions, and knowledge about education in general—and about curriculum especially—as the core of the qualitative planning process.

Each meeting begins with an example given by one of the teachers. As the leader of the group, I do not know what will happen, and I take the discussion wherever the participants wish to go. At other times, I bring a statement and ask the participants to relate to that statement with an example of a personal experience.

One meeting began with a teacher telling a story about a child in her class who did not want to participate in "circle time." When she tried to convince the child to participate, he began arguing and even showed aggression towards her. If she did not make him join the group, she felt he was missing the knowledge she gave the rest of the class. She asked how she could make him join "circle time" without a battle.

This story was the trigger for discussion. We first tried to understand the assumptions in this case. The teacher and others began sharing their assumptions about the child, their role in general and in this case, and their expectations. I tried to show them that their reaction to the child was influenced by these assumptions and that these assumptions prevented them from seeing *the child* and what he was trying to tell us in that situation. We elaborated on the difference between *seeing the child as a whole* and *seeing the problem* as our focus.

At this point, the teacher added a very meaningful piece of information, saying that while he sat far from the circle he was very attentive, watching them with a telescope. Through that information, I showed them that only after we began relating to the child could we open ourselves to his overall behavior and see how he participated in the circle—although in a unique way. We explored the assumptions issue, showing that the way we define "participating" influences our reaction to the child and may interfere with seeing the child himself with his needs and concerns. We connected that observation to Roby's concept of "habits," showing that there are times when we choose a quick solution (how to make him participate in our way) losing the deliberation process (using a comprehensive view in looking at the situation).

At this point, the teacher began talking about the child differently, and I chose that moment to add a theoretical basis to her view. I connected the child behavior to the process of "self-development" using concepts from Stern (1985) and Greenspan (1992). Stern (1985) focuses on the basic existential question of who the child is in two domains: "me versus others" and "me with others." We tried to understand how the child's behavior reflected his concern about his place in the class as part of the group and simultaneously his place in the class as a unique person. We then tried to think about appropriate ways to respond to the child. Through this process, the teachers experienced using the strategy of deliberation in a concrete case.

We ended the meeting with the following insight:

> The human eye (and an individual's interpretation of the world) is the most misleading organ in the human body—in the child more is hidden than is obvious, so we should search beyond the obvious whenever and wherever we can.

Through these meetings, we hope that we can help teachers begin to relate to situations in wider and deeper ways, and help them realize that their vision is like a kaleidoscope that changes and has many colors according to their ability to use that kaleidoscope in different ways.

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Classroom Adaptation:
A Case Study of a Montessori School

Daungvan Bunnag

Abstract

Since the Montessori method came to the United States, the original Montessori philosophy has evolved to incorporate many American adaptations. This paper explores how teachers in one Montessori school introduced new elements to the existing principles of Maria Montessori in their classrooms. The results of the study show that these teachers have valid knowledge of the original Montessori philosophy, and their cautiously implemented adaptations complied with the original principles of Montessori.

Aims

Maria Montessori was an Italian physician and an anthropologist. But perhaps she is most remembered for her contribution as an educator. At the turn of the 20th century, Dr. Montessori discovered a revolutionary way to direct young children's learning. Her method was efficient, effective, and nothing less than extraordinary, especially when compared with the stringent early education system of the time. With a seemingly passive teaching approach, the Montessori method produced an unusual level of productivity from a child. Fascinated with the earlier work of Jean-Marc-Gaspard Itard and Edouard Seguin, Dr. Montessori made a breakthrough observation that "Impressions do not merely enter [the child's] mind; they form it. They incarnate themselves in him. The child creates his own 'mental muscles,' using from this what he finds in the world about him" (Montessori, 1967, pp. 25-26). In contrast to the teacher-centered approach dominating at the time, Dr. Montessori showed repeatedly that children could learn more effectively if adults provided them with a prepared environment where they would be enticed to exert their power. She insisted on following and observing the child, and she dismissed adults' aggressive intervention to introduce learning materials. Dr. Montessori also praised the benefits of the multi-age classrooms but discouraged the inclusion of fantasy play. Her method later received some criticism for its lack of music and art and its lack of concern for social interaction and creativity (Hainstock, 1978).

When Dr. Montessori published her work in 1909, her fame grew beyond her native country, and educators around the world began to adopt the method and apply it to young children in their countries. Having gained international acceptance, the Montessori method needed to be modified in order to adapt to the new hosts (Hainstock, 1978; Kramer, 1976). For instance, one of the primary goals of the American Montessori Society (AMS), founded in 1960, was "to establish the teaching of Montessori's insights in an American cultural setting" (Neubert, 1992, p. 66). Continuing into the present day, many aspects of the Montessori method are still being challenged to evolve to incorporate the expectations and values of today's children (Epstein, 1990; Loeffler, 1992).

Many researchers have devoted their efforts to studying these modifications and adaptations of the Montessori method, especially in the United States. Examples of these adaptations include the expansion of the Montessori method into the public school system (Kahn, 1990; Buermann, 1992; Wang, 1992), special education programs (Hale, 1992; Lamorea & daCosta, 1996; Richardson, 1992; Pickering, 1992), programs for disadvantaged children (Lopez, 1992), and in-home education (Hainstock, 1978; Hoppert, 1980). These studies investigated the changes made to the original method of Dr. Montessori when it was applied to programs other than the conventional Montessori schools. Consequently, most of these studies concluded that program-level adaptations were appropriately integrated.

At the classroom level, Holmes foresaw in 1912 the adaptations of the American Montessori "depending on the characteristics of the children and teacher" (Kramer, 1976, p. 170). Epstein (1990) also stated that trained Montessori teachers are encouraged to modify and improve Montessori practice in their classrooms. From these statements, it would have been anticipated that numerous studies on classroom adaptations would follow. However, due to rapid growth in the various programs and extensions as in the examples above, much effort has been concentrated in the adaptations in these programs. Because the importance of the adaptations at the level of classroom had been recognized (Holmes, cited in Kramer, 1976; Epstein, 1990), but considerably less attention had been given to the teachers' influence in their Montessori classrooms, I sought to determine how Montessori-trained teachers choose to adapt the philosophy and introduce new elements into their classrooms.

To investigate the extent of adaptation in individual classrooms, a Montessori school was selected, and permission was granted for study. Classroom observation as well as teachers' interviews were conducted. This combinative approach was used to promote the dependability and accuracy of the representative Montessori classrooms. The data presented here were selected examples from each classroom and descriptions of the interaction between the teacher and the students, including some specific conversations recorded within the respective classrooms. The interpretation for each room was then woven into the supporting evidence interpreted from the interviews of the teachers. The resulting individual portraits are presented in this paper.

Teacher I: "Sandy"

When I entered Sandy's Montessori classroom, the first thing that struck me was its decoration. Covering the walls were pictures of musicians. A large stereo and a considerable number of cassettes occupied one corner of the room. Classical music played in the background, and children were scattered all over the room. The room contained many child-sized tables and chairs. Some tables had math workbooks open on them, while some were occupied by students concentrating on an exercise. The classroom was organized neatly; many Montessori exercises were visible. There was an art corner, a reading corner, and a snack area. A main characteristic of the carpeted side of the room was a "time line," a blue oval boundary about the size of a standard living room rug with a yellow duck patterned in the middle. I was told that this time line would be used for group activities such as unit studies, calendar-time, show and tell, and story telling, during which students all sat in the middle of the oval. There were about 20 students in Sandy's classroom.

Sandy's Montessori-Based Philosophy

Sandy was a qualified Montessori teacher. The quality that Sandy valued the most in a Montessori program was that children enjoy what they learn. One of the emphases of her Montessori method was to allow the child to be independent and enjoy his or her learning. Sandy said that the Montessori method developed the whole child as a person as well as allowing the children to learn and grow on their own while enjoying themselves. Sandy said that she does not teach but merely "directs" the students towards their proper development. She also believed that the Montessori materials were self-teaching and self-correcting, and that the children would learn on their own if she let them handle and solve their own problems.

Sandy believed that, using these materials, the children naturally would interact among themselves when solving their problems. She believed that this method promoted their social interaction in addition to their problem-solving skills. In other words, the children learned to respect one another. The development of the children's social interaction was supported by my observation of the classroom. The children usually gathered into small groups to work on the materials of their choice. I observed two boys working together on the "Pink Tower" exercise:

> In the carpeted section of the classroom, George was working on the "Pink Tower" when Bill approached him and appeared to have made a suggestion. After a short negotiation, the two boys agreed and together walked towards one of the shelves. They helped each other to bring back pieces of the "Red Rock" exercise. They kept going back and forth, combining the two materials together with frequent discussions.

Adaptations of the Original Method

Ever since she was an assistant, Sandy tried to design the curriculum in her classroom to accommodate two things: what the children would enjoy and what would be necessary for their development. For this purpose, when she became the head teacher, Sandy brought in additional materials such as music, unit studies, and academics to broaden her Montessori-based curriculum. Although these activities were not mentioned in the original method of Dr. Montessori, Sandy felt that their inclusion in her classroom was in the children's best interest. These activities were introduced as supplements to enhance the effectiveness of the method, not to contradict the existing philosophy.

Music. Sandy said that music was a part of her life, and as a musician, she felt it was vital that one respect and understand his/her instrument. Her personal love of music was adapted and transformed in the classroom. She mentioned that each Montessori classroom at the school had a "personality" of its own, and that the flavor of her classroom was music. "We always turn on the music as a background, so you know we can develop the children's aesthetic brain as well as cognitive." Sandy argued that this adaptation set the tone and initiated the joyful rhythm in her classroom; she felt very strongly about the positive effects music had in her classroom:

> I tend to play music in the background. I think it sets the tone. Either classical or Celtic, flute music or Peruvian flute music, ... easy listening ... something that would set the tone for the day. It might be seasonal. Right now we're doing Celtic music because of the time of the year, we're doing St. Patrick's day.

She also showed me the music workbooks and the picture books about music history she made for the whole class. In addition to music, Sandy also introduced some activities involving the fine arts. She mentioned that "I do a lot of seasonal works. In kindergarten right now, we are doing van Gogh. And we are just finishing the unit on Monet. It is fun." However, her emphasis in this area was significantly less than in music.

Unit Studies. Because she believed that the children should enjoy what they learn in class, Sandy tried to keep their options as open as possible. Similar to the music, Sandy brought extra curriculum such as themes or unit studies to her classroom because she believed that the students found them interesting and they introduced variety to her curriculum. Sandy mentioned that the difference between her program and non-Montessori programs was that she tried to keep the topics broad and general. These topics included seasons, holidays, and occupations. To keep up the children's interest and enthusiasm in class, there were many different units that she had incorporated into the daily routines. Here was one example:

> For today, we're doing spring. Looking for signs of spring ... I was going to jump rope.... We are making spring baskets filled with eggs. We also talked about how different cultures celebrate different things [at different] times of year.... We talked about Easter.... We talked about respecting nature ... and respecting your family ... that's basically what I went over today ... if it's Spring, I can come up with a lot of different things.... Thursday we will dye eggs.

Academics. Another main element that Sandy had adapted for her classroom in addition to the unit studies was academic materials and workbooks. Although the Montessori materials play an important role in the curriculum of Sandy's classroom—they are self-correcting and the children could learn to interact among one another—Sandy also believed that an academic-oriented adaptation was necessary. This component was combined with her focus on the children's enjoyment as well as their proper development. Sandy asked her children to work on academics on a regular basis. Even though she explained that it "doesn't have to be anything that is too demanding," the children's work in her class usually involved a math and language activity.

Epilogue

The quality that Sandy valued most in a Montessori program was the importance of the children having fun while they learn. She believed that the enjoyable self-teaching and self-correcting Montessori materials properly developed all aspects of the children, such as social interaction and problem-solving skills. Because of the quality of these materials, Sandy saw her role not as a teacher but as a facilitator who merely oversaw the classroom. Believing in her understanding of the core of the Montessori philosophy, Sandy introduced new elements to broaden the scope of her classroom in an effort to keep things enjoyable for her children. Because she had background in various fields, Sandy tried to utilize these experiences to expand her curriculum. The music, art, and academics that she added to her classroom were examples of her effort to create the best learning atmosphere for her children. In all, Sandy trusted that the added elements helped to sustain the joy in her classroom and set the tone for a proper learning atmosphere while complementing the principles of the philosophy. Her introduction of these personal adaptations to her Montessori classroom bound all the things she loved to serve the single purpose of developing her children.

Teacher II: "Tammy"

Tammy's classroom looked like any ordinary Montessori classroom. The room was divided in half—one half carpeted and one uncarpeted. There were not as many tables and chairs scattered around the room as in Sandy's classroom because Tammy emphasized the use of concrete exercises as opposed to workbooks. Instead of asking the children to complete a portion of the workbooks each day, Tammy used activities such the sandbox for writing, storybooks for reading, and word cards for vocabulary development. Students were not asked to work on the workbooks until they were 5 or 6 years old. The Montessori materials were stored neatly in their places. The materials were arranged on low shelves so that the children could have easy access to them. A big canvas stood in the middle of the uncarpeted portion of the room. A small sink was by the coatroom, and a little area for snack was nearby. There were about 20 students in this afternoon class.

Tammy's Montessori-Based Philosophy

Tammy was a certified Montessori teacher. She modeled the curriculum in her classroom around Montessori methods. Her main philosophy focused on the concept of the children teaching themselves. In her classroom, Tammy was careful to let the children make their own decisions. Her job, as a teacher, was to follow them and guide them accordingly. Her emphasis in the classroom was the students' experience, not their success; the process, not the product. With these principles, Tammy believed that the children would, on their own, learn adult responsibilities such as problem solving and time management. Having the children make their own choices was Tammy's main teaching philosophy, and what she believed to be the core benefit of the Montessori program:

> The most important part is that this child leaves feeling good about himself because of the successes he's had or she's had—that she is able to or he is able to make choices and live with the choices that he makes.

Because she praised her students for making their own choices, it was understandable that Tammy discouraged interfering with them while they learned. Tammy said that she found "the other curriculum for preschools too much teacher directed" and that "everyone is doing everything at the same time." Tammy contrasted this approach with her Montessori philosophy that "the teaching is … what the children do, it's not what [the teachers] do." She believed that her job was just to show them the materials, how to use the materials, and the qualities of the materials—what the children took from that was entirely up to them.

Allowing the children to learn on their own and valuing their decisions, Tammy concluded that "Montessori is not about the product, but the process." In addition, Tammy liked the multi-age classroom. For example, her kindergartners could help the 3-years-olds because they were familiar with the materials. At the same time, the experienced students learned to be leaders—helpful, gentle, tender, and understanding. This role built their confidence about their knowledge and their decisions. On the other hand, for the younger kids, the multi-age classroom provided a comforting atmosphere, almost like having "an older sibling there to help you ... it's like a family."

Adaptations of the Original Method

In addition to her Montessori-based teaching philosophy, Tammy also introduced some new concepts to her classroom. Examples of these elements were the introductions of unit studies, fantasy play, art, and music—elements that were not described in the original method of Dr. Montessori. The motivation for such additions was, like Sandy's, to improve the existing curriculum. Nonetheless, having valued the importance of the Montessori method and its underlying principles, Tammy adapted these ideas to utilize maximally the benefits of the original curriculum.

Unit Studies. The idea of unit studies was distinct from the philosophy of Montessori. However, Tammy adapted her unit study to blend into the Montessori curriculum. She stressed that "[her unit studies are] available for everyone to do, but [the students] don't all have to do it if they don't want to. It's an option." Although the concept was new to the curriculum of Montessori, the general principle remained that the children still had the freedom to choose. A scene from Tammy's unit study is illustrated below:

> Today's unit was "penguins." Tammy picked up a penguin book from the shelf and asked questions about the story in the book. The children raised their hands if they wanted to answer. Some examples of the questions were "Is penguin a mammal or a bird?" or "Is penguin a carnivore or an omnivore?" Most children were able to answer correctly. I felt that although Tammy repeated this book again, the children seemed to have a lot of fun with this activity.

Art and Music. Similar to the way she integrated the unit studies into the Montessori program, Tammy introduced concepts of art and music to her classroom. The children sang along with tapes and CDs. There was a unit on rhythm instruments. The art shelf contained mostly what she called "open art." Basically, there were just paper, scissors, glue, crayons, pencils, etc., for the children to use to create their own project of interest. Again, similar to the adaptation of the unit studies, the incorporation of the Montessori philosophy was clear. Tammy said that the focus was on the students' creativity, saying that "we're not going to come out with the same project" and that "everyone doesn't have to do it."

Fantasy Play. Tammy said that in a "strict" school, fantasy play would be strictly prohibited. However, in her classroom, Tammy allowed the children to play if they wanted to. She said it was important during Dr. Montessori's time that the children didn't "go off to Lalaland" because their survival depended on reality not fantasy. However, "it is not as strict now," because the children's survival no longer depends merely on reality. It was apparent that Tammy did not believe that her students should be prohibited from fantasy play.

Kisses and Hugs. Another example of Tammy's adaptation of the Montessori method was her attitude towards hugging and touching the children. According to the principles of Montessori, there was to be minimal touching between the teacher and the children. The school also took this stance: "they were very concerned about touching and hugging. Can't touch, can't hug." However, having been a day care teacher, Tammy insisted that it was okay to hug and touch, especially when the children had been away from their parents all day long. Simply, she felt comfortable doing it, and she was not about to agree to something that she did not see as appropriate.

Epilogue

Tammy's faith in Montessori lay in the children's power to learn by themselves. She encouraged her children to make their own decisions and accept the consequences. In her classroom, the emphasis was on the process of learning, not the final outcome. She saw herself as a facilitator who merely observed the children and kept things running smoothly in the classroom. Tammy adapted several concepts based on her personal philosophy while realizing that some of her values overlapped those of Montessori's. Nonetheless, these ideas were introduced because the teacher believed that they would benefit her children. The unit studies, art, and music were brought in to expand the scope of the existing Montessori materials. The fantasy play and kisses/hugs represented Tammy's decision to eliminate certain features from the original philosophy. She did not view them as being inappropriate. In all, Tammy was a good teacher, who was committed to her children's healthy development. Her curriculum, whether Montessori based or personally adapted, was designed in the children's best interest.

The Director: "Rebecca"

Although the director of the school had not yet gone through the Montessori training process, she had done extensive reading on Montessori materials to familiarize herself with the method. She pointed out some observations that could be considered discrepancies from the original guidelines of Dr. Montessori.

Different Flavors

Rebecca acknowledged that, although the Montessori program was more standardized than others, it could only minimize the inevitable "human factors" not eliminate them. The six classrooms still had six different personalities. The "flavors" in these classrooms were mainly influenced by the character of each teacher. "Anytime you've got human beings, you're going to have some kinds of personalities." However, she said that this variety was actually beneficial to the children because they would not always be with a single person or in a single classroom in the future:

> We want [the differences in the classrooms] because the children are not always going to be with us. We want them to be able to adjust to different people, to understand that all kinds of adults can care about them, and be there for them and help them ... so I allow for the individual personalities in the classroom.

Parent Education

In addition to the classrooms being different from one another, some adaptations of the orthodox Montessori methods were needed to accommodate the modern era. When Maria Montessori first introduced her revolutionary idea to early childhood education, her principal experiments were based upon the children in "The Children's House." These youngsters were mostly underprivileged children with mental disabilities. The power that parents exert today on society's educational system was not a factor in this earlier endeavor: Rebecca acknowledged this potential problem. Some parents complained that the atmosphere in the Montessori classrooms was too free and nonacademic. Rebecca went on to emphasize that she had to work with parents to make sure parents understood and kept an open mind towards these methods. Since she had been at the school, the director was very active in educating the Montessori parents about the concepts and principles of the Montessori method and the school.

Discussion and Conclusions

This study was aimed at discovering how teachers in a Montessori school adapted their philosophy and introduced new elements to the existing principles of Maria Montessori. Different adaptations in the current Montessori classrooms were investigated to determine the factors that influence such adaptations. The data were analyzed and presented as portraits of each case to reflect the characteristics of the corresponding classrooms.

The discussion of this study is divided into two main sections: the concurrence and the adaptations of the teachers' practice to the original Montessori method. These elements were supported with specific evidence from the classrooms. The sources of influence that may contribute to such outcomes were also proposed.

Concurrence

The findings suggested consistency in the teachers' understanding of the principles of Montessori. According to *The Absorbent Mind* (Montessori, 1973), the child is capable of absorbing knowledge and has the power to teach himself. This belief was the basis of this revolutionary and effective curriculum; the other elements revolve around this message. At this school, although some aspects of the curriculum varied from one classroom to the next, the teachers appeared to understand the core concepts of the method. The children's freedom was the main emphasis in all classes. Both teachers explained that their philosophy focused on the concept of the children learning by themselves and choosing their own tasks. They wanted the children to enjoy what they did and acquire knowledge at their own pace as well as to accept the consequences. These teachers concentrated on following their children and allowing them to develop naturally using the Montessori materials. The self-teaching materials were highly valued and respected in both classrooms. Because the emphasis in the classroom was placed on the children, the teachers described themselves as facilitators rather than instructors; the focus was on the children's learning process, not the product. All three personnel interviewed shared the Montessori philosophy.

Adaptations

Although the basic principles of Montessori were retained, some adaptations were seen in the classrooms. Unlike the shared concepts above, these modifications were not always the same in all classrooms. These adaptations were not necessarily negative deviations, but rather an individualization by each teacher done in the children's best interest. The factors contributing to these adaptations could be divided into two subcategories: personal and external adaptations.

Personal Adaptations. One apparent source of the personal adaptations was the individual teacher's background. Focusing on this factor, one noticed that the experiences in the teachers' earlier careers significantly influenced practice in their classrooms. For example, prior to her introduction to Montessori, Sandy was involved in music as a singer. Music was a major part of her life. Hence, it was not surprising that music was the main theme in her classroom—most of the activities revolved around music. There would be music playing in the background, discussion of the seasonal music, and sessions on music history. As for Tammy's classroom, some characteristics of the classroom also reflected her experience as a day care teacher. Tammy was familiar with her role of comforting the children when they had been away from their parents all day. Being used to that role, she continued to cuddle the children even though the Montessori philosophy suggested that kissing and hugging the children should be kept to a minimum. These examples showed clearly the strong influences of the teachers' pre-Montessori background on practice in their classrooms.

Another source of the personal adaptations was the teachers' personal beliefs. For instance, Montessori proposed that any fantasy play should be prohibited because the children should focus on the real world. However, Tammy amended this philosophy because she believed that it no longer applied. Her point was made on the basis of the time period that the Montessori method was constructed: children's survival today no longer depends just on reality. Tammy therefore adapted the original philosophy and chose not to intervene when her children engaged in fantasy play. In addition, based on their personal beliefs, the teachers also introduced new elements to their teaching to broaden the original curriculum. Academic teaching observed in Sandy's classroom represented this aspect. Sandy asked her children to work on some paper-based academic work on a regular basis because she believed that this type of academic learning in the classroom was necessary. The added assignment contrasted with the original method of teaching academics through the Montessori's self-correcting materials. This adaptation further reflected Sandy's trust of her personal beliefs and judgment.

External Adaptations. Unlike the personal adaptations where changes were implemented independently by different teachers, external adaptations occurred from the environment outside the classrooms such as the community or the school policy. The prime examples were the unit studies. This academic adaptation was present in all the classrooms observed. The interviews suggested that these methods of teaching were incorporated from an external curriculum, probably the traditional system, but modified to fit the Montessori program. Sandy noted that this adaptation helped broaden her curriculum. However, she still tried to keep the emphasis on the children's freedom, which meant that they did not have to participate in such activities if they did not want to. Tammy took a similar stance to make sure the topics of her unit studies were based on her students' interests.

It seems that the original source of unit studies was the community, namely the parents. The most apparent case was the academic emphasis in Tammy's classroom. The teacher explained positively that the emphasis on academics in her classroom was not at all her intention. She felt that this development came from the parents' influence because the program was located in a university town. They expected the school to possess a strong academic program. This example showed clearly the power exerted by the parents. Rebecca must have realized this substantial influence since she also supported the introduction of an education program to assist parents with the Montessori philosophy. The program was aimed to minimize confusion about the school's methods in order to avoid any unbeneficial and unnecessary adaptations.

In summary, this study examined specific classroom implementations of two teachers, comparing them with Dr. Montessori's original principles. It was found that some adaptations varied between classes and were personal adaptations resulting from differences among the teachers. Other adaptations occurred uniformly throughout the program and were defined as external adaptations. While the personal adaptations were significantly influenced by factors such as individual beliefs and background, the external adaptations were derived primarily from external sources, which affected the school as a whole, such as parents. Regardless of types and derivations, these adaptations were implemented with great respect for the original Montessori philosophy. Any changes that had been implemented had been intentionally modified to allow the children to have the absolute right to choose from their own interests and proceed at their own pace to fulfill all of their potential possibilities, which is the essence of the Montessori method.

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Preparing Teachers for the Changing Early Childhood Classroom

Parent-Teacher Partnerships: A Theoretical Approach for Teachers

Carol R. Keyes

Abstract

Noting the importance of the parent-teacher relationship to maintaining good home-school partnerships, this paper discusses the research on parent-teacher partnerships, including factors that affect the development of effective relationships: (1) the degree of match between teachers' and parents' cultures and values, (2) societal forces at work on family and school, and (3) how teachers and parents view their roles. The paper then presents a theoretical framework that teachers can use to enhance parent-teacher partnerships. This framework is based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems perspective, Getzels' social systems perspective, Katz's and Hoover and Dempsey's work on the role of parents, and Epstein's typology of parental involvement.

> It's a dance, a dance between teacher and student and parent and child and parent and teacher and so on. Knowing when to respond and when to let go and let them find out on their own is a dance, a subtle communication of letting each other know what our needs are and how we can help each other. Interview, teacher (Henry, 1996, p. 182)

While the value of the home/school partnership is universally accepted it is not always easy to promote or maintain.[1] As we have moved from small communities with intimate connections to a very diverse mobile culture, the increasing complexity of relationships, roles, and functions has often complicated the collaborations. This paper focuses on teachers' responsibilities in the parent-teacher partnership, and although the partnership needs to be a two-way dynamic to work, "teachers are really the glue that holds the home/school partnerships together" (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 1999, p. 36).

The paper is organized into two parts. In the first part is a review of the literature related to parent-teacher partnerships. In the second part, I propose a theoretical framework through which teachers can enhance parent-teacher partnerships.

Parent-Teacher Relationships

Most teachers think about having a good relationship with parents. However, just as images of teaching and learning environments vary, so do images of "good" parent-teacher relationships. At one end of the spectrum, the image of a good relationship is an effective separation of roles and functions between home and school, an optimal social distance combined with mutual respect. The family meets the school's expectations efficiently, and the school effectively educates the child without undue demands on the home (Henry, 1996; Epstein, 1995; Powell, 1989; Lortie, 1975). At the other end of the spectrum is the image of the school functioning as an extended family, a more open system. Family and school intersect around the life of the child (Powell, 1989; Galinsky, 1977; Taylor, 1968).

As teachers think about their work with parents and families, they often have mixed feelings. There are good feelings of shared efforts and mutually valued achievement with some parents; while with others, there is a sense of frustration, helplessness, or even anger over conflicting perceptions and understandings. The degree of success that teachers have in developing a partnership with parents depends heavily on the "fit" between parental cares and concerns and those of the teacher. Unlike many other kinds of relationships in people's lives, the parent-teacher pairing occurs by assignment rather than choice. The common interest is the schooling of a child. What *all* good parent-teacher relationships have in common is the "absence of conflict." Optimally this absence of conflict is due to a presence of mutual trust and respect; less optimally, it is due to the absence of caring.

Factors That Affect the Development of Effective Relationships

There are a number of factors that affect a teacher's ability to develop a smooth parent-teacher partnership. Some of these factors pose problems, and the challenge is how to develop an effective working relationship in spite of the problems that may be present. The factors include (1) the degree of match between teachers' and parents' cultures and values, (2) societal forces at work on family and school, and (3) how teachers and parents view their roles.

The Degree of Match between Teachers' and Parents' Cultures and Values

In today's mobile world, it is less likely that parents and teachers will hold beliefs and values that are closely matched compared to previous generations. In earlier times, teachers lived in the communities with families, and there was a "natural bridge" between family and school (Hymes, 1974). Now parents and teachers share the community less frequently; teachers do not have the same sense of belonging to the community that they did when they lived in the same town. Teachers often come from a socioeconomic class, race, or ethnic group that is different from the children they teach. Differences in these realms are associated with different interactional styles and language systems, as well as values, and present challenges to developing effective partnerships (Burke, 1999; Langdon & Novak, 1998; Henry, 1996).

Teachers' own backgrounds are a key factor in how they relate to parents (Sturm, 1997; Solity, 1995). A classroom teacher's experience highlights the influence of background and the challenges to re-creating a bridge. Participating in a teacher group discussion of intercultural communication, a teacher wrote (as if realizing it for the first time):

> Culture means more than holidays and food; it includes all of the subtle patterns of communication, verbal and nonverbal, that people use every day. I noticed how easily I valued cultural diversity in the abstract or in the form of occasional holidays yet how readily I rejected cultural differences when they appeared in the form of parents' different approaches to child rearing. (Sturm, 1997, p. 34)

She went on to write about the group's reflection:

> We realized that unexamined values, beliefs, and patterns of interaction learned when we were children exert a powerful influence on our communication and care giving routines. Our sincere intentions didn't prevent us from rejecting parents' diverse values when they challenged our own cherished beliefs. We were often unable to set aside our own cultural values long enough to listen to parents. (Sturm, 1997, p. 35)

From the parents' perspective, some of the factors that influence a degree of openness include (1) cultural beliefs related to the authoritative position of teachers that prevent parents from expressing their concerns, (2) a lack of education that may cause parents to be intimidated in interactions with teachers, (3) language differences that may result in parents feeling uncomfortable if no one speaks their language, and (4) different socioeconomic levels that may result in child-rearing practices and values that conflict with those of the teachers (Keyes, 1995; Greenberg, 1989).

If there is a consistent match between teacher and family cultures and values, the probabilities are greater for developing effective professional skills in working with parents over time. In contrast, the greater the discontinuities, the more effort that is needed to promote a partnership (Lightfoot, 1978).

Societal Forces at Work on Families and Schools

The breadth of changes in society is well documented. Among these changes are the increasing reliance on technology, the changing nature of work, a more diverse population, and a more service-oriented society. For the purpose of this paper, the concern is how such forces affect schools and families. As we think about building bridges to support parent-teacher partnerships, it is critical to keep these forces in mind.

In addition to what was at one time the "traditional" two-parent family, we now have two-parent working families, single-parent families, adoptive families, and remarried or blended families, to cite just a few of the new family constellations. Family roles have also become more flexible and fluid. Mothers may function in what was once the traditional role of fathers, fathers may function as homemakers, and children may perform some parental functions for siblings. Thus, the school does not necessarily have access to a consistent adult to speak for the family. Sometimes it's one parent; other times it's a different parent from a blended family; and at still other times, it may be a sister, brother, or aunt—making effective communication a real challenge.

As far back as 1950, it was understood that parents and teachers had multiple responsibilities and pressing time demands:

> As we work with parents, it is especially important that we not forget the complexities of family life. When we see a tired youngster coming to school, we may want to shake the parents and make them read a good article about children's need for sleep. It is easy to forget—or maybe we never knew—that at home three children sleep in one bed while mother and father sleep in the same room with them. We put pressure on parents to come to school meetings as if these were the only true important events of the day. But parents, even very good parents who care deeply for their children, have shopping to do, floors to scrub, hair that must be washed, and often have tired feet and aching backs.... You have to avoid the error of seeing life only from the school's side as if homes simply flowed along smoothly with no problems of their own. The closer you move to parents the more realistic your expectations become.... Each family has their private story of how it lives its present days. (Hymes, 1974, pp. 5, 17)

Twenty-nine years later, the responsibilities and time demands are still present:

> But whether parents can perform effectively in their child-rearing roles within the family depends on role demand, stresses, and supports emanating from other settings. As we shall see, parents' evaluations of their own capacity to function, as well as their view of their child, are related to such external factors as flexibility of job schedules, adequacy of child care arrangements, the presence of friends or neighbors who can help out in large and small emergencies, the quality of health, social services, and neighborhood safety. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 7)

Both parents and teachers experience job stress. For parents, the number of hours they work, the amount of job autonomy and job demands, and relationships with supervisors affect their other relationships. For teachers, the job stress also is affected by the number of hours worked, schedules, amount of autonomy, role ambiguity, physical demands of the job, and clarity of the program (Galinsky, 1988). Teaching is physically and emotionally exhausting, and reaching out to parents is sometimes viewed as one more burdensome task. So, in fact, both parties to the relationship are buffeted by strains and tensions in their worlds.

How Teachers and Parents View Their Roles

> More than half a century ago, Willard Waller (1932) observed that parents and teachers are "natural enemies." The basis of his argument was that parents and teachers maintain qualitatively different relationships with the same child, especially in regard to affective bonds and spheres of responsibility and as a consequence want different things for the child. (Powell, 1989, p. 20)

In the past 50 years, however, there have been changes in how schools and families have viewed each other. Because of a developing awareness of the importance of the bridge between home and school, schools have reached out to families and families have pressed to be heard in schools.

Educators have described and defined the differences in the roles and spheres of responsibility of teachers and parents (Katz, 1984; Getzels, 1974). Figure 1 depicts the framework developed by Katz (1984).

Figure 1 describes the distinctions in parent and teacher roles. In Katz's model, the teacher's role is specific to schooling, while the parent's is universal in all aspects of the child's life. Teachers are responsible for all the children for a specific period confined to the school setting, and therefore the teacher's role is more objective, detached, and rational, using insights, techniques, and abilities to support each child. The teacher's role is shaped by professional knowledge about "all children." Parental relationships, on the other hand, are shaped by their own child for whom they are responsible 24 hours a day and are likely to demonstrate intense partiality, attachment, and even irrationality in their interactions about their own child (Katz, 1984). Given the difference in roles, it is critical to look for the meeting points as partnerships are developed.

Influences on How the Parent and Teacher Roles Are Enacted

Confusion results when teacher and parent roles become ambiguous. The first challenge is to make public some of the parameters of the role enactment patterns. The second challenge is to figure out how to use those parameters as a bridge to effective parent-teacher partnerships. Therefore, it is essential to look at some of the forces that influence how the roles are enacted.

Parents' Role Construction

How parents view their role in relation to school also affects parent-teacher relationships. Parents' role construction may be described as parent focused, school focused, and/or partnership focused. In the parent-focused construct, parents consider that they have primary responsibility for their children's educational outcome. In the school-focused construct, parents feel the school is primarily responsible for the children's educational outcome, and in the partnership-focused construct, parents believe that teacher and parent working together are responsible (Reed, Jones, Walker, & Hoover-Dempsey, 2000). It seems apparent that how parents interact will vary based upon the construct the parent holds.

Teachers' Role Construction

Teachers' role construction has developed primarily outside the formal education arena and is less clearly documented in the literature but is evident in the field. Teachers may view their role as parent focused, school focused, and/or partnership focused. The parent-focused view evolved out of the parent-cooperative movement. In that movement, teachers and parents worked side by side, empowering parents

Role Dimension	Parenting	Teaching
1. Scope of function	Diffuse and limitless	Specific and limited
2. Intensity of affect	High	Low
3. Attachment	Optimum attachment	Optimum detachment
4. Rationality	Optimum irrationality	Optimum rationality
5. Spontaneity	Optimum spontaneity	Optimum intentionality
6. Partiality	Partial	Impartial
7. Scope of responsibility	Individual	Whole group

Figure 1. Distinctions between parenting and teaching in their central tendencies on seven role dimensions (Katz, 1984).

and giving parents teaching roles. This view is most prevalent in early childhood programs. The school-focused role reflects teachers who believe in an effective separation of roles and functions between home and school. This view is more typical in elementary schools and intensifies the older the child gets. The partnership-focus perspective, where family and school work cooperatively, is a more recent construct, evolving as the literature began to point to the significant benefits that accrue to children, parents, and teachers as a result of the partnership. As with parents, how the teachers interact will vary based upon the beliefs the teachers hold.

Teachers' and Parents' Efficacy Beliefs

In addition to how they construct their own understanding of role, teachers' and parents' sense of efficacy also influences what type of interactions they are likely to have (Reed, Jones, Walker, & Hoover-Dempsey, 2000). Research has shown us that teachers and parents with high efficacy levels are more likely to succeed in parent-teacher relationships (Garcia, 2000; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). On the one hand, teachers and parents who have had successful interactions with each other, observed or heard about others' successes, and/or felt that efforts were worthwhile are more likely to have that personal sense of efficacy (Garcia, 2000; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997). On the other hand, teachers and parents may have "leftover anxieties" (Taylor, 1968, p. 272) from earlier experiences with schools that influence how effective they are likely to feel. Rebuilding the bridge for effective parent-teacher relationships may require different supports for those individuals.

From the parents' perspective, most have little choice in choosing a school. Many feel powerless to influence schools and are threatened by the authority of the school. Some feel that running the schools should be "left up to the experts" (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Greenberg, 1989). Some resist or are reluctant to participate because they worry about their family's privacy. Others find the school climate or school bureaucracy hard to deal with (Henry, 1996; Comer & Haynes, 1991). The lack of clarity about what to expect at meetings and conferences also poses a challenge for the relationship (Keyes, 1979; Lortie, 1975). For many apparently uninvolved parents, their school experience was not positive, and they may now feel inadequate in the school setting (Brown, 1989).

From the teachers' perspectives, some feel unappreciated by parents. They say that parents don't come to conferences or meetings, don't read the material they send home, and won't volunteer for school activities. Some teachers feel that parents seem to lack interest in what's going on with their children. Others describe parents as adversarial or apathetic, always a challenge (Galinsky, 1990; Hulsebosch & Logan, 1998; Langdon & Novak, 1998; Greenberg, 1989). In both teachers' and parents' cases, we do not know whether their lack of a sense of efficacy occurs because they have an adversarial point of view or they lack skills, or because there is a cultural division.

Teachers' and Parents' Expectations

Different expectations on the part of both teachers and parents may also affect the parent-teacher partnership. Often teachers and parents place different emphases on factors central to developing confidence in their relationship. For example, parents may emphasize teachers' knowledge and skills. They want teachers to know and care about teaching, about their children, and about communicating with them. Teachers have more confidence in parents who have similar ideas about teaching issues, and child-rearing practices, and who freely share important things about their children (Powell, 1998; Rich, 1998).

Teachers' and Parents' Personal Attributes

Closely related to roles and efficacy are personal attributes. According to the research, several characteristics appear to positively influence parent-teacher partnerships. The relationships are enhanced when teachers' personal attributes include warmth, openness, sensitivity, flexibility, reliability, and accessibility (Swick, 1992; Comer & Haynes, 1991). The partnerships are positively influenced when parents' personal attributes include warmth, sensitivity, nurturance, the ability to listen, consistency, a positive self-image, personal confidence, and effective interpersonal skills (Swick, 1992). While neither teachers nor parents may have all these positive personal attributes, teachers, who are armed with this knowledge, may be more effective at bridging.

Teacher and Parent Communication

One of the categories of parent involvement identified by Epstein (1995) is communication. This communication includes teacher invitations, first meetings with parents, conferences, and adapting communication to meet the diverse needs of parents. Two aspects of communication, first meetings and teacher invitations, have significance because they influence how roles will be enacted as partnerships develop. First meetings with parents, often the first personal connection that is made, set the tone for the subsequent relationship, making it critical to be aware of issues of cultural styles in conversation, space, and eye contact. Research suggests that the teachers' invitations to parents are also a critical factor in promoting more extensive parent involvement.

Literature Review Summary

The research described above tells us that effective parent-teacher relations are founded on (1) the understanding of the unique elements of the parents' and teachers' roles and how they complement each other and (2) subsequent modifications of their roles growing out of negotiations that reflect the unique needs of both parent and teacher. In effective partnerships, parents and teachers educate each other during open two-way communication. Each point of view enlightens the other. "Mutually responsive relationships seem more likely to flourish if such programs focus more on the interconnectedness of parents and teachers through their mutual commitment to children and on exploring ways to enhance and celebrate this connectedness" (Sumsion, 1999).

If these effective partnerships are to develop, the literature also tells us to be cognizant of the factors described earlier and recognize (1) the diversity in teachers' and parents' cultures and values including their backgrounds, race, ethnic group, socioeconomic class, and educational level; (2) forces such as technology, workplace characteristics, and changing family structures; and (3) influences on teachers' and parents' enactment of their roles including how they construct their roles, their sense of efficacy, their expectations and personal attributes, and their communication styles.

Moving Toward a Theoretical Framework

In this portion of the paper, I have created a theoretical model that attempts to unite much of the literature reviewed above. I will use two different frameworks in presenting this model. The first is the ecological systems perspective, and the second comes from the social system perspective.

Ecological Systems Perspective

"The ecology of human development involves the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation between an active growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by relations between these settings and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 21). The ecological environment, according to this theory, consists of a set of nested structures, each inside the next, like a set of Russian dolls. At the innermost level is the immediate setting containing the developing person. This microsystem concerns relations between the person and his or her immediate environment. The next circle, the mesosystem, represents the relation between the settings in which the developing person participates (e.g., work and home, home and school). The third level, the exosystem, refers to one or more settings that affect the person but do not contain the person (e.g., workplace or church). The final level, the macrosystem, refers to values, laws, and customs of the culture that influence all the lower orders (see Figure 2). Within this theoretical structure, there is interconnectedness both within and between the settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 8).

In Figure 3, I present the first part of my model by integrating the research on parent-teacher roles into the Bronfenbrenner model. The box to the left

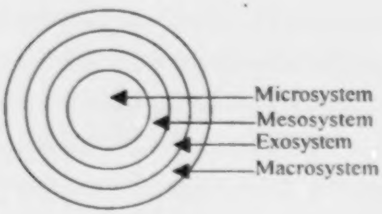

Microsystem
Mesosystem
Exosystem
Macrosystem

Figure 2. Bronfenbrenner's ecological model.

represents all of the qualities of the teacher that have developed in the microsystem. The box to the right represents all of the qualities of the parent that have developed in the microsystem. The inner-most circle, the microsystem, represents the teacher-as-person or parent-as-person with all the factors described earlier—culture, values, role understanding, sense of efficacy, personality characteristics, expectations, communication skills, knowledge of the child or children—that have developed from their experiences including the present challenges to building and bridging the partnership above. The next circle represents the mesosytem where the adults interact within the school bringing what they have experienced with them. The two outer circles, exosystem and macrosystem, represent the societal influences of the more distant environments and contexts including workplaces, laws, and customs. This adaptation of Bronfenbrenner's model helps us to see the complexity of the teacher-as-person and the parent-as-person, and the skill that is required to bridge the differences that exist.

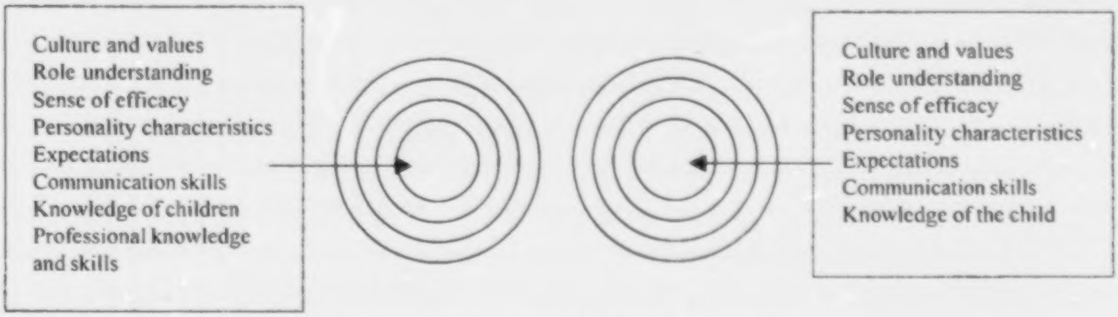

Culture and values
Role understanding
Sense of efficacy
Personality characteristics
Expectations
Communication skills
Knowledge of children
Professional knowledge and skills
Culture and values
Role understanding
Sense of efficacy
Personality characteristics
Expectations
Communication skills
Knowledge of the child

Figure 3. Ecology of the teacher and ecology of the parent.

The second aspect of the model considers the significance of the child (Figure 4). The parent-teacher pairing occurs by assignment. Their common interest is the child. Though the child only appears in this figure within this proposed model, the child is a variable that is pervasive. How parent and teacher come together over their common interest in that child is influenced not only by the mitigating personal and social factors mentioned in Figure 2 but also by how they each interact with the child, and their feelings with regard to that child. Recall that in the role description the parent focuses on her child, and the teacher must view the child as an individual but also part of the class (Sumsion, 1999).

Social System Perspective

The third aspect of my model utilizes Getzels' social system perspective (Getzels, 1978). Just as the ecological perspective helps remind us of the complexity of the individuals, in this case the teacher and

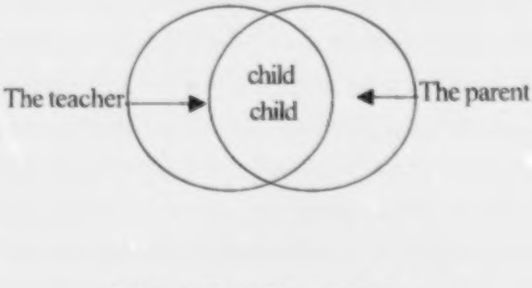

The teacher
child
child
The parent

Figure 4. The child in the model.

the parent, a social system perspective helps us to understand the dynamic quality of the interaction between the participants and their impact on each other. Figure 5 shows Getzels' social system model.

Looking at Figure 5, the elements of the system include an institution with its roles and expectations, the normative dimension; and individuals with their personalities and dispositions, the personal dimension. Behavior is a result of the interplay between the role and expectations and the personalities of the individuals involved.[2] Real individuals occupy roles, and each individual stamps a role with a unique style.

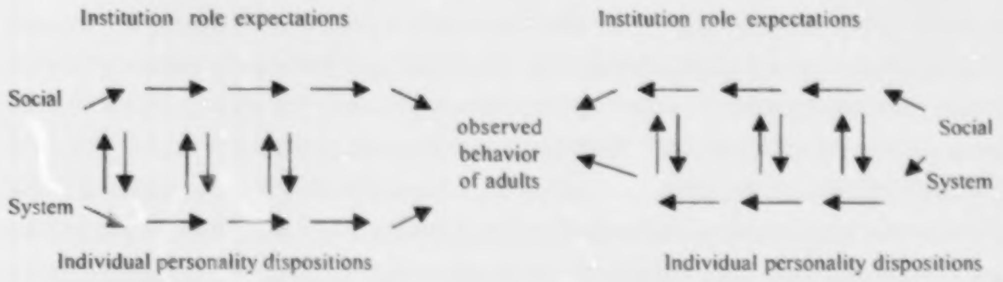
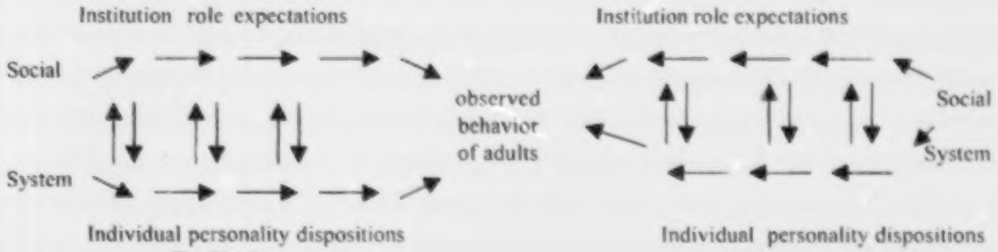

Institution role expectations
Social
System
Individual personality dispositions
observed behavior of adults
Institution role expectations
Social
System
Individual personality dispositions

Figure 5. Getzels' social system.

The teacher and parent meet together as adults, about their common interest the child, each bringing their life experience and all the forces that affect them to a social system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The social system provides the framework for the interaction. In the partnership, defined as the social system in this case, the factors described above influence the relationship. Looking at Figure 5, the top row of social system sets out the influences of the institution, role, and expectations. The teacher's role is specific, detached, rational, intentional, impartial, and focusing on the whole group, while the parent's role is diffuse, attached, irrational, spontaneous, partial, and individual (Katz, 1984). The bottom row sets out the influences of the individual personality and dispositions. Here the focus is the teacher's or parent's construction of role, sense of efficacy, expectations, personal attributes, and communication skills. A parent may be parent focused, school focused, and/or partnership focused (Reed, Jones, Walker, & Hoover-Dempsey, 2000); and the teacher may be parent focused, school focused, and/or partnership focused (Garcia, 2000; Swick, 1992; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). Institution is not referred to, although the institution and its characteristics play a role, particularly in what kinds of parent involvement (Epstein, 1995) will be promoted.[3] This interpretation of Getzels' model high-


Institution role expectations
Social
System
Individual personality dispositions
observed behavior of adults
Institution role expectations
Social
System
Individual personality dispositions

The Teacher

The Parent

Figure 6. The teacher and parent in the social system.

lights the dynamic and complex nature of the parent-teacher partnership and the importance of considering the interplay among all the elements.

The Role of Communication in the Theoretical Framework

Epstein's typology includes six major aspects of parent involvement. In Figure 7, I have created a graphic to show the significance of communication in relation to the other five categories. As noted earlier, two aspects of communication, first meetings with parents and teachers' invitations, play a crucial role in influencing how parent-teacher partnerships will develop. As discussed above, communication skills are part of the personal dimension of the social system. However, a separate figure has been created to accentuate the importance of that communication to bridging, leading to initial effective parent-teacher partnerships as well as promoting more extensive parent involvement as characterized by Epstein's typology (Epstein, 1995).

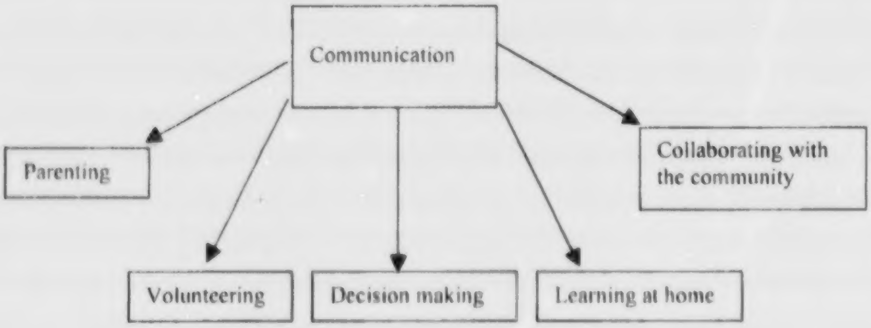
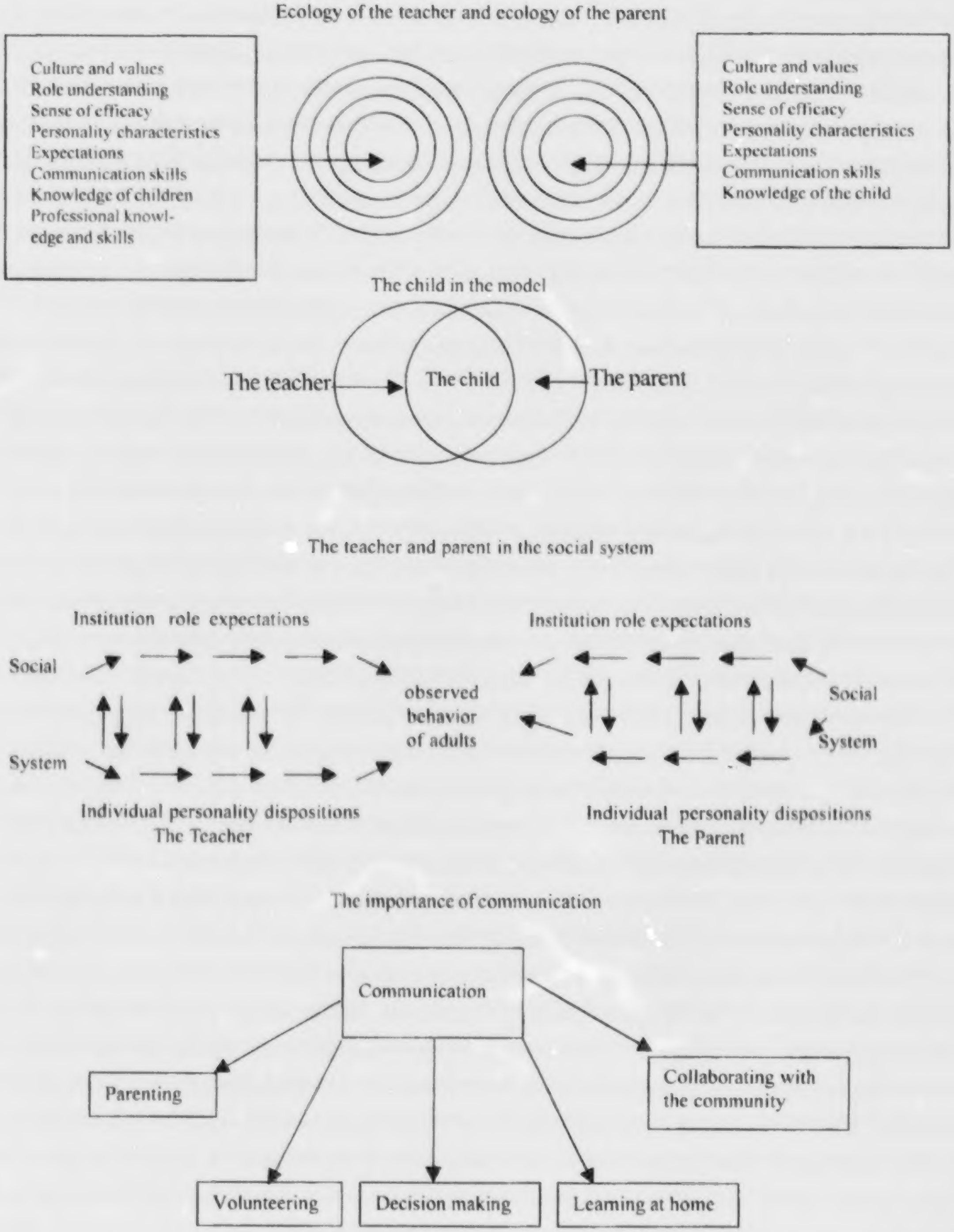


Figure 7. The importance of communication.

In Figure 8, I present the full model. My hope is that teachers will use the model as a way of thinking and visualizing (1) their approach to the parent-teacher partnership and (2) their reflection about interactions that have taken place. The process does not dampen spontaneity but rather provides distance, so that teachers can view events from more than their own perspective. Working within the framework may help teachers consider their attitudes about the value of parent-teacher partnership, look at its construct, and monitor their responses to individual situations.

Incorporating the Theoretical Framework into Teacher Education

We know that "teachers' collaborative relations with parents and work in a family context do not come about naturally or easily" (Powell, 1998, p. 66). From the very first teaching assignment, many teachers find themselves struggling in working with families. Some have ethical concerns; others just lack knowledge, skills, and strategies (Powell, 1989). Professionals have repeatedly challenged the field to provide both teacher and administrator training in working with parents (Powell, 1998; Epstein, 1989). In the past few years, teacher education programs have responded by developing a range of activities to accomplish that preparation (de Acosta, 1996; French, 1996; Koerner & Hulsebosch, 1996; Morris et al., 1996; Silverman, Welty, & Lyons, 1996). This theoretical framework, a systemic model that considers complexity, dynamics, and interrelationships (Senge, 1990), would also make an important contribution towards preparing teachers to work more effectively with the diverse parents they now encounter in schools.



Ecology of the teacher and ecology of the parent

The child in the model

The teacher and parent in the social system

The importance of communication

Culture and values
Role understanding
Sense of efficacy
Personality characteristics
Expectations
Communication skills
Knowledge of children
Professional knowledge and skills
Culture and values
Role understanding
Sense of efficacy
Personality characteristics
Expectations
Communication skills
Knowledge of the child
The teacher
The child
The parent
Institution role expectations
Social
System
observed behavior of adults
Individual personality dispositions
The Teacher
Institution role expectations
Social
System
Individual personality dispositions
The Parent
Communication
Parenting
Collaborating with the community
Volunteering
Decision making
Learning at home

Figure 8. A theoretical framework for parent-teacher partnerships.

Notes

[1] Though I don't discuss the values of family/school relationships in this article, it is important to share the values that accrue to parents, teachers, and children with both parents and teachers. There are many articles to use as sources (Coleman, 1997; Kieff & Wellhousen, 2000; Thorkildsen & Scott Stein, 1998; Epstein, 1995; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995; Comer & Haynes, 1991; Becher, 1986; Lightfoot, 1978; Hymes, 1974; Greenberg, 1989).

[2] There are the elements of communities and values in Getzels' social system, and they affect the institution and the individual as both affect the communities and values. I have omitted discussing them for now because Bronfenbrenner's ecology takes care of them and I want to keep this first framework less complicated for teachers.

[3] Gemeinschaft and Gesselschaft are two sociological terms that may be used to describe institutions. Gemeinschaft refers to local community and Gesselschaft the larger society. If the institution, school in this case, is more Gemeinschaft, it is more likely to relate to family/school/community partnerships and collaborations. If the institution is more Gesselschaft, it is more likely to be corporate in nature and likely to foster family school separation. For a full discussion of this aspect of the institution, see Cibulka and Kritek (1996), Henry (1996), and Sergiovanni (1996).

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Preservice Teachers' Beliefs about Primary Classroom Practice: Similarities and Differences between Early Childhood and Elementary Prepared Students

Nancy File & Dominic F. Gullo

Abstract

Two different professional preparation paths lead to teaching positions in the primary grades, resulting in conflicting paradigms. In early childhood education (ECED), child development theory traditionally serves as the context for decision making regarding instructional strategies and curriculum content. In contrast, elementary education (ELED) historically focuses on prescribed grade-related student outcomes as the context for curriculum and instruction. A study was conducted to examine the beliefs of 119 preservice teachers who were either at the beginning or end of their teacher preparation programs in ECED or ELED. Participants completed a survey that questioned their beliefs about curriculum content, teaching strategies, guidance/discipline, classroom activities, and assessment. Results indicate that ECED students favored classroom practices that were more consistent with the National Association for the Education of Young Children guidelines for practice than did ELED students. ECED students at the end of their program favored more child-directed curriculum and less frequent use of teacher-directed activities than did students at the beginning of their program. ELED students at the end of their program favored more behavioral classroom management strategies and less frequent use of child-directed activities than did beginning students.

Questions of what to teach are important at every level of education, including teacher education programs. It is equally true that at all levels the American education system is marked by both ongoing changes in curriculum and the enduring effects of history and tradition. Teacher education programs have been "put to the fire" recently in response to societal expectations that schools improve in producing learning outcomes with children. Consequently, the obligation to examine our educational practices, while always important, is a vital task for teacher educators today. Do we have a clear sense of what we want students to learn? How effective are our programs at accomplishing our purposes? These broad questions served as the frame for this study.

Historically, and continuing today, there are a variety of configurations for early childhood teacher licensing, including a stand-alone license, an endorsement added to elementary education, and no specialized early childhood license for the early primary grades (grades 1-3). Current momentum is toward common use of a stand-alone early childhood license that encompasses birth through age 8 (Isenberg, 2000). This movement reflects the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) definition of the early childhood period (Bredekamp, 1996). Although early childhood stand-alone certification is growing, it cannot be expected that it will replace elementary certification in the primary grades. More and more, teachers with either an early childhood education (ECED) or elementary education (ELED) teaching certificate might educate children in the early primary grades. The question of how ECED-prepared teachers compare with ELED-prepared teachers consequently becomes important. School districts will have increasing choices for hiring for the primary grades related to the area of undergraduate study and certification.

Early childhood and elementary education have separate histories and a tradition of different teaching practices (Bloch, 1992; Goldstein, 1997). The child-directed and play-oriented methods that have predominated in ECED stand in contrast to the traditionally heavier reliance in ELED on teacher-directed, large-group instruction and discrete content areas. Another way of probing these traditional differences is to identify key terms in each field. For example, in ECED, common key terms are "development" and "activities"; while in ELED, common key terms are "methods" and "lessons." This language illustrates the deep-seated influences of developmental psychology and curriculum theory on ECED and ELED, respectively (Day & Goffin, 1994).

Since its initial publication in 1986, the NAEYC's position statement on developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) has grown in its influence on primary grade practice (Day & Goffin, 1994). Although the statement originated in one professional organization that had historical roots separate from public schools and the elementary grades, its tenets were later promoted by other organizations, including the National Association of State Boards of Education (1991) and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (1990). In spite of the longstanding traditional differences between ECED and ELED, there are now movements to more closely align the philosophy and practice of the two.

This research is thus situated within a context of both contrast and change, not only between the professional fields, but within each as well. While there are wide variations in primary grade practices (e.g., whole language, phonics), similarly research has shown that DAP is not invariably observed in early childhood practice (Dunn & Kontos, 1997). Nor is DAP universally embraced by teacher educators (Delpit, 1988; Swadener & Kessler, 1991). Indeed, the DAP statement has been revised once since its original publication (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) and was recently characterized as a "working document" (Dunn & Kontos, 1997).

In this study, our instrument was drawn from the NAEYC's DAP statement, in deference to its widespread adoption as a guiding position for practice. The majority of research about DAP has taken place within preschools and kindergarten classrooms, but recently researchers have begun to examine the early primary grades. Buchanan and her associates found that teachers in the first, second, and third grades varied in their agreement with DAP on an attitude survey (Buchanan, Burts, Bidner, White, & Charlesworth, 1998). They also found that teachers certified in ECED reported using developmentally inappropriate activity examples less frequently than teachers certified in ELED. There was no significant difference related to certification in their self-reported use of developmentally appropriate activity examples, however. Vartuli (1999) also surveyed practicing teachers. In this study, the teachers were employed in classrooms at the preschool (Head Start) through third-grade levels. Again, the results indicated that teachers with ECED certification expressed attitudes more aligned with the DAP statement than teachers with an ELED certification, although teachers with ECED certification were more likely to be teaching Head Start and kindergarten. Somewhat similarly, among a small sample, McMullen (1999) found that primary-level teachers (kindergarten through third grade) expressed attitudes more aligned with DAP if they had ECED degrees or ELED degrees with previous teaching experience at the preschool level when compared with teachers with an ELED degree and no experience below the primary level.

Only one study has examined preservice teachers using similar methodology. Surveying students at the beginning and end of the student teaching semester, Smith (1997) found that students in an ELED program with ECED endorsement reported more agreement with DAP than students in an ELED-only certification program at both survey periods. Also, ELED-only students reported higher agreement with a subscale measuring traditional practices than did the students in the ECED endorsement program. Thus, the differences noted by researchers surveying practicing teachers appear to have their roots during the preservice period.

The current study extends the knowledge in the field in two ways. First, both beginning and end-point preservice teachers were surveyed, allowing a comparison of both major discipline (ECED or ELED) and point in program. In what ways were students similar and different in their beliefs as they began the teacher socialization process and as they began the capstone experience of student teaching? Also, in the institution studied, ECED is a stand-alone certification option; the ECED and ELED programs are housed in the same department but have individual professional education requirements, coursework, and faculty, in contrast to the Smith study. Second, in previous research, the scale and subscale scores analyzed have been framed as developmentally appropriate and developmentally inappropriate or traditional. In this study, composite scale scores were analyzed as well as subscales scores of conceptually related items to provide a finer-grained understanding of points of agreement and difference between students in the two professional disciplines. For example, do attitudes differ when the items relate to classroom management, to assessment, to curriculum, etc.?

The research questions for this study were as follows:

1. What are the similarities and differences between beliefs about primary classroom curriculum and instructional practices held by beginning students and student teachers who are enrolled in an ECED teacher preparation program?
2. What are the similarities and differences between beliefs about primary classroom curriculum and instructional practices held by beginning students and student teachers who are enrolled in an ELED teacher preparation program?
3. How do ECED and ELED preservice teachers at the beginning and end of their teacher preparation programs compare to each other with regard to beliefs about primary classroom curriculum and instructional practices?

Method

Sample

Participants for this study were 119 preservice teachers enrolled in either an ECED or ELED teacher training program at a large midwestern university. The sample included 45 students who were enrolled in the ECED program (24 beginning students; 21 student teachers) and 74 students who were enrolled in the ELED program (30 beginning students; 44 student teachers). The beginning students in each of the teacher certification programs were in their first semester of classes in their respective majors. The student teachers were in the final semester of their major. After students begin their professional programs, the course sequence takes approximately two years. Students begin their professional program upon completion of their general education requirements.

Procedures

Participants were surveyed at the beginning of the semester using the *Beliefs about Primary Grades Curriculum and Teaching Survey*, a modification of the primary version of *Teacher Beliefs and Practices Survey* (Burts, Buchanan, Charlesworth, Fleege, & Madison, 1995). The statements in the survey were based on NAEYC's position statement on developmentally appropriate practice in the primary grades. The beginning students completed the survey in their first class in their respective major, while the student teachers filled out the survey in their respective student teaching seminars.

The survey was divided into two sections. In the first section, "Primary Grade Beliefs," students responded to statements about primary grade teaching practices. Students' beliefs regarding the importance of teaching practices in the primary grades were assessed. A five-point Likert scale was used (1 = not at all important to 5 = extremely important). Items from the "Primary Beliefs" section included statements such as:

> *It is _____ for teachers to use reinforcements such as treats, stickers, and/or stars to encourage appropriate behavior.*
>
> *It is _____ for primary grade children to learn by actively exploring relevant and interesting materials.*

Six scores were obtained, a composite score and five subscale scores. The subscales included only those items from the survey that pertained to that particular subscale area, while the composite score was made up of the total of all items. The subscales for the "Primary Grade Beliefs" section included (1) Behavior Management, (2) Teaching Strategies, (3) Child Expectations, (4) Curriculum, and (5) Assessment.

In the second section of the survey, "Instructional Activities," students responded to statements regarding their beliefs about the appropriateness of various primary grade activities. In this section, students rated the various activities according to how often certain activities should take place in the primary classroom. A five-point Likert scale was used (1 = almost never to 5 = daily). Items from the "Instructional Activities" section included statements such as:

> *How often should children in a primary class play competitive games to learn factual material (e.g., math facts, states)?*
>
> *How often should children in a primary class use manipulatives (like pegboards, puzzles, Legos, Unifix Cubes, tangrams, geoboards, base 10 blocks, and/or Cuisenaire Rods)?*

Four scores were obtained, a composite score and three subscale scores. As in the previous section, the subscale scores were made up of specific items in the survey, while the composite score was the score obtained when all of the survey items were combined. The subscales for the "Instructional Activities" section of the survey included (1) Behavior Management, (2) Child Directed, and (3) Teacher Directed.

For each of the two sections in the survey, a higher score would mean that students' beliefs were more consistent with NAEYC's statement about primary teaching. Some of the items in the survey were stated in such a manner that if it were scored a "1" by the respondent, it meant that their beliefs were consistent with the NAEYC standards for primary teaching, while others were stated such that a "5" indicated that the respondent's beliefs were consistent with the NAEYC standards. For this reason and for purposes of analysis, some items were reverse coded so that an appropriate comparison could be made. Means on the composite scales and subscales were used in the analyses.

Results

In order to answer the first question, ANOVAs were performed on the ECED beginning students' and student teachers' "Beliefs" and "Activities" composite scores. Results of the analyses indicated that there was a significant difference between the groups on the "Beliefs" composite score [$F(1,44) = 5.25, p < .05$]. Examination of the means indicated that the student teachers scored significantly higher than the beginning students. The difference between the two groups for the "Activities" composite score was not significant [$F(1,44) = 1.04$, NS].

In order to determine if there were any significant differences between the two ECED groups on the "Beliefs" and "Activities" subscales, Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was performed on the subscale scores. For the "Beliefs" subscale scores, the multivariate F was not significant [$F(1,44) = 1.32$, NS], therefore the univariate tests were not examined. The multivariate F for the "Activities" subscale was significant [$F(1,44) = 5.29, p < .01$]. Examination of the univariate Fs indicated that the student teachers scored significantly higher on the "Teacher-Directed" subscale [$F(1,44) = 7.07, p < .01$], thus were more aligned with DAP. The difference between the two groups on the "Behavior Management" subscale approached significance [$F(1,44) = 3.76, p < .06$], with the beginning students scoring higher than the student teacher group. Means and standard deviations for the composite score and subscale scores for the ECED beginning students and student teachers can be found in Table 1.

In order to answer the second question, ANOVAs were performed on the ELED beginning students' and student teachers' "Beliefs" and "Activities" composite scores. Results of the analyses indicated that for the "Beliefs" composite scores, there was no significant difference between the groups [$F(1,73) = 0.13$, NS]. The ANOVA performed on the "Activities" composite score indicated that there was a significant difference between the groups [$F(1,73) = 5.60, p < .05$], with the beginning students scoring significantly higher, thus indicating responses more consistent with the NAEYC standards for primary teaching than the student teachers in the ELED program.

In order to determine if there were any significant differences between the two ELED groups on the "Beliefs" and "Activities" subscales, Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was performed on the subscale scores. The multivariate F was not significant for either the "Beliefs" [$F(1, 73) = 0.13$, NS] or "Activities" [$F(1,73) = 2.63$, NS] subscales; therefore, the univariate Fs were not examined. Means and standard deviations for the ELED beginning students and student teachers for the "Beliefs" and "Activities" composite and subscale scores are presented in Table 1.

ECED and ELED Students' Means and Standard Deviations on the Beliefs and Activities
Composite and Subscale Scores for the
at the Beginning and End of Their Programs*

	ECED Students				ELED Students			
	Beginning Students		Student Teachers		Beginning Students		Student Teachers	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Beliefs Composite Score	3.75	0.25	3.93	0.28	3.64	0.26	3.61	0.36
Beliefs Subscale Scores								
DAPBM	3.39	0.42	3.57	0.49	3.12	0.52	3.27	0.56
DAPCE	3.94	0.38	3.94	0.41	3.54	0.46	3.59	0.52
DAPCU	3.73	0.36	3.95	0.34	3.86	0.32	3.72	0.41
DAPTS	3.70	0.33	3.87	0.33	3.54	0.30	3.54	0.38
DAPAS	3.82	0.60	4.11	0.43	3.66	0.53	3.77	0.64
Activities Composite Score	3.52	0.29	3.61	0.35	3.37	0.41	3.17	0.33
Activities Subscale Scores								
ABM	3.74	0.42	3.46	0.53	3.39	0.67	3.00	0.64
ACD	4.03	0.40	3.89	0.57	3.81	0.62	3.57	0.47
ATD	2.61	0.62	3.08	0.56	2.62	0.61	2.51	0.49

*DAPBM – behavior management; DAPCE – child expectations; DAPCU – curriculum; DAPTS – teaching strategies; DAPAS – assessment; ABM – behavior management; ACD – child directed; ATD – teacher directed.

In order to answer the third question, 2 (certification) x 2 (year in program) ANOVAs were performed on the "Beliefs" and "Activities" composite scores. The ANOVA on the "Beliefs" composite score yielded a significant F for certification [F (1,119) = 13.57, p < .001). Examination of the means indicated that overall the ECED students scored significantly higher than the ELED students. Neither the year in program [F (1,119) = 1.74, NS] nor the interaction [F (1,119) = 3.27, NS] was significant.

Analyses on the "Activities" composite score indicated a significant main effect for certification [F (1,119) = 19.80, p < .001]. The main effect for year in program was not significant [F (1,119) = 0.64, NS]. The analyses also revealed a significant certification by year in program interaction [F (1,119) = 5.15, p < .01]. *Post hoc* analyses using planned comparison t-tests were conducted to determine the nature of the significant interaction. They indicated that while there was no significant difference between the ECED and ELED students at the beginning of their programs [t (1, 119) = 2.14, NS], there was a significant difference between the ECED and ELED student teachers [t (1,119) = 24.88, p < .001]. Examination of the means indicated that the ECED student teachers scored significantly higher than the ELED student teachers. The means and standard deviations for the ECED and ELED students are presented in Table 2.

In order to determine if there were any significant differences between the ECED and ELED beginning

ECED and ELED Students' Composite and Subscale Scores on the
for Beliefs and Activities*

	ECED Students		ELED Students	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Beliefs Composite Score	3.83	0.28	3.62	0.32
Beliefs Subscale Scores				
DAPBM	3.47	0.46	3.30	0.54
DAPTS	3.78	0.34	3.54	0.35
DAPCE	3.94	0.39	3.57	0.50
DAPCU	3.84	0.37	3.78	0.38
DAPAS	3.96	0.54	3.72	0.60
Activities Composite Score	3.56	0.32	3.25	0.37
Activities Subscale Scores				
ABM	3.61	0.49	3.16	0.68
ACD	3.96	0.49	3.67	0.54
ATD	2.83	0.64	2.56	0.54

*DAPBM – behavior management; DAPCE – child expectations; DAPCU – curriculum; DAPTS – teaching strategies; DAPAS – assessment; ABM – behavior management; ACD – child directed; ATD – teacher directed.

teacher and student teacher groups on the "Beliefs" and "Activities" subscales, 2 (certification) x 2 (year in program) MANOVAs were performed on the subscale scores. The MANOVA for the "Beliefs" subscales indicated a significant main effect for certification [F (1,119) = 5.53 $p < .001$]. Neither the main effect for year in program [F (1,118) = 0.80, NS] nor the interaction [F (1,118) = 1.84, NS] was significant. The univariate analyses for certification yielded significance for the "Child Expectations" subscale [F (1,115) = 17.74, $p < .001$], the "Teaching Strategies" subscale [F (1,115) = 13.74, $p < .001$], and the "Assessment" subscale [F (1,115) = 5.46, $p < .05$]. Neither the "Behavior Management" nor the "Curriculum" subscales were significant. Examination of the means indicated that in all occurrences the ECED students scored significantly higher than the ELED students.

The MANOVA for the "Activities" subscales indicated a significant main effect for certification [F (1,118) = 6.57, $p < .001$] and for year in program [F (1,118) = 5.64, $p < .001$]. The certification by year in program interaction was not significant. The univariate tests for certification showed significant differences on the "Behavior Management" [F (1,115) = 12.99, $p < .001$], "Child Directed" [F (1,115) = 7.43, $p < .001$], and "Teacher Directed" [F (1,115) = 6.75, $p < .01$] subscales. In all instances, the ECED students scored significantly higher than the ELED students. The univariate tests for year in program indicated significant differences for the "Behavior Management" [F (1,115) = 8.77, $p < .01$] subscale. Examination of the means showed that the beginning students scored significantly higher (M = 3.55; SD = 0.59) than the student teacher group (M = 3.15; SD = 0.65). Neither the "Child Directed" test nor the "Teacher Directed" univariate test was significant. The means and standard deviations for the ECED and ELED beginning students and student teachers for each of the subscales are presented in Table 1.

Discussion

In examining the results of this study, we first want to pay attention to the value of the reported means. They generally ranged between 3.00 and 4.00, on a scale of 1 to 5, with only a few exceptions. The response scaling anchored 3 as "fairly important" or "sometimes, weekly" and 4 as "very important" or "regularly, 2-4 times per week," for the "Beliefs" and "Activities" scales, respectively. This result indicates that the students tended to endorse both items reflecting the DAP statement and items reflecting more traditional, teacher-directed practices (the latter were reversed for analysis, meaning that the lower the score, the greater the rejection of that practice as important). With all means at and somewhat above the midpoint, students could not be characterized in an "either/or" fashion, as strong proponents either solely for DAP or traditional teaching methods. The lowest means reported were for the "Teacher Directed" activities subscale, which, accounting for the reverse scoring, indicates that students favored these types of activities occurring, on average, between "sometimes" and "regularly."

Similar to previous research (Buchanan, Burts, Bidner, White, & Charlesworth, 1998; Smith, 1997), we found that ECED student teachers favored less frequent use of teacher-directed activities compared with ELED student teachers. This result was not found with beginning students, who held similar opinions across the two programs, with scores diverging at the end of their programs of studies.

We began our analysis by looking at the two programs individually, comparing students near the beginning and end points of their professional studies. Students in ELED held mostly similar attitudes across the two points in their program. Only the "Activities" composite score was significantly different between the two groups, with student teachers showing less agreement with DAP than beginning students. Several similarities were found as well for beginning and end-point students in ECED. These included the subscales of the "Beliefs" scale, the "Child Directed" activities subscale, and the "Activities" composite score. Yet, differences between the two groups were nested within these attitudes as well. Although the groups scored similarly on the "Activities" composite scale, student teachers registered significantly less agreement with traditional, teacher-directed activities than did beginning students. And while the subscales on the "Beliefs" scale were not examined individually, due to a nonsignificant multivariate *F* on the overall scale, student teachers were significantly more in agreement with DAP than were beginning students. Thus, program effects favoring DAP were more apparent with the ECED students than with the ELED students. It should be noted, however, that even as ECED and ELED students began their programs, their average scores were at or slightly above the midpoint. This finding indicates that students were not entering their professional studies with attitudes greatly different from what would be emphasized during their programs.

Similarities in attitudes were found when students in the two programs were compared on the "Behavior Management" beliefs and "Curriculum" beliefs subscales. Ideas about how curriculum should be structured and how the classroom should be managed were alike regardless of certification program. Several areas of difference related to certification option were found as well. Students in ECED, considered across the two points in program, expressed attitudes more aligned with DAP than students in ELED on both the "Beliefs" and "Activities" composite scales, as well as the "Child Expectations" beliefs, "Teaching Strategies" beliefs, "Assessment" beliefs, "Behavior Management" activities, "Child Directed" activities, and "Teacher Directed" activities subscales. These results reflect traditional differences between the two fields, with expectations for homogeneity within the classroom, greater reliance on teacher-directed and whole-group teaching strategies, and more use of testing and workbooks for assessment purposes characterizing ELED more so than ECED. This pattern of both similarities and differences, as well as the relative values of the means, reflects perhaps the evolution of a field, with both change and tradition playing parts in determining students' attitudes.

The analyses also revealed one difference related to time in the program as a main effect. Student teachers, across the certification areas, expressed attitudes less aligned with DAP on the "Behavior Management" activities subscale than did beginning students.

Student teachers advocated more frequent use of strategies such as time-out and external reward systems. This finding is likely related to the dramatic nature of classroom management issues for students moving into a practicing classroom teacher role. In addition, it appears that student teachers may have been inclined to adopt strategies in use in the schools in which they were placed, perhaps because of lack of confidence or feeling inadequately prepared with alternative strategies.

As we considered the implications of these results, questions arose. To what extent are the pressures placed upon public schools a factor in what we found? In the urban school district in which the university is located, direct instruction is a growing trend, and there are discussions about the wider use of standardized testing on a regular basis with the youngest children in the schools. How does this factor affect the ELED program, whose students invariably graduate into this system, in comparison to ECED, where students have placement options both within and outside of the public schools? In the ECED field, do we believe we have resolved these issues, or has the fact that the field had its roots outside of the public school system blunted the effect of these influences on ECED thought and practice?

We found another question raised by the results interesting as well. In ELED, the younger primary grades represent the lower levels of the age range of interest. In contrast, in ECED, they represent the upper levels of the age range being studied. How does this finding affect beliefs and practices? Is there a tendency in ELED to "push down" from older children and a corresponding tendency in ECED to "push up" from younger ones? What are the implications for children?

These questions characterize the heart of what teacher educators do—what do we believe should be happening in classrooms, and where are these beliefs based? It is clear that while students in the two fields were similar, they were not identical in many ways. In spite of the fact that the constructivist underpinnings of DAP are now almost universally espoused, traditional differences continue to influence the fields.

We must express some caveats about this study. First, the examination of beliefs without direct comparison to either teaching practice or child outcomes is necessarily limited. Pajares (1992, p. 328) asserted, however, that "understanding the beliefs of preservice teachers is essential to teacher education." An examination of the beliefs of students provides a window to questions about how programs prepare students to make decisions about what and how to teach. Still, inferences about the abilities of students to be effective teachers should not be drawn. Second, the study was cross-sectional, rather than longitudinal. Finally, because only two teacher preparation programs were examined within a single institution, these results should be considered preliminary until extended.

In sum, those responsible for hiring in the public schools face choices, not only related to the flexibility of the certification option, but also related to the expertise those prospective teachers bring with them. Prospective teachers from ECED and ELED are "primed" through their beliefs to shape their classrooms in somewhat different ways. Previous research has indicated that these differences may continue as teachers practice their profession (Buchanan, Burts, Bidner, White, & Charlesworth, 1998; McMullen, 1999). As we continue to explore issues of teacher preparation, we as teacher educators will also be able to shape our programs to reflect our most important beliefs.

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The Teacher as Researcher: An Experimental Approach toward Teaching in the College Classroom and Beyond

Darlene DeMarie

Abstract

Teaching others to teach should not be done using a "cookbook approach." There are far too many variables to ever have the same results with different people in different classes in different historical times and places, given the infinite number of possible patterns of relationships. This paper describes methods for helping educational psychology students to learn to assess the results of teaching systematically. First, making one's thinking overt helps students to develop their metacognitive skills. Second, showing students not only the popular methods but also contradictory approaches helps them to learn that no approach is completely right or completely wrong. We look for the results of each and decide merits and limitations in terms of learning, attitudes, and engagement. There are always people in class who prefer learning from those more familiar, traditional methods, so by discussing the pros and cons for individuals, students become better able to select approaches that match goals and children. Third, class discussions encourage class members to share their observations of members' attitudes and learning. Students experience the the scientific process in action: hypothesize, test, measure the results, and revise one's theory accordingly. Finally, class assignments help students to apply the learning with children.

Without an undergraduate background in experimental psychology and independent investigations outside the college classroom, I think I would have been a terrible public school teacher. In the 1970s, education classes gave us answers rather than encouraging us to ask and answer questions that arose during teaching. We never explored or measured the results of approaches. Instead, we learned to use textbooks for teaching, and we practiced delivering well-structured, predictable lessons. The teachers' manuals specified the questions we should ask and the answers we should expect from children. It was assumed that children who did not fit within the boxed curriculum would be referred to the school psychologist, who would try to determine what was wrong with them.

In retrospect, I ventured into teaching with confidence that was not justified. Fortunately, I also had a sound educational philosophy and the knowledge and motivation to employ an experimental approach toward teaching. I had acquired my philosophy, knowledge, and motivation as a result of taking courses outside the education department, interacting with education professors outside of class, reading trade books, and completing a major in psychology. I attended a small, liberal arts college, where students were encouraged to pursue their own interests and to seek answers to their own questions, even if their interests and questions crossed traditional, disciplinary boundaries. My professors knew me well, and they facilitated my learning.

Lessons Learned Outside Education Classes: Educational Philosophy and Experimental Attitude

My educational philosophy, through which I viewed children as worthy of respect and capable of being active learners, evolved from taking an elective course in child development from the psychology department and from reading trade books that I purchased at local bookstores. I read about the British Infant Schools and books by Jonathan Kozol, Sylvia Ashton-Warner, John Holt, James Herdon, Maria Montessori, and others. These books were recommended by education professors but were read outside of any of their classes. Although the textbooks we read for education classes seemed dead by comparison, my independent readings showed me that ideas about education were alive and were stimulating. I learned to take a developmental perspective—to focus on children's progress along a continuum of learning—rather than to focus on their deficits when performing prescribed curriculum tasks. By taking this perspective, I was convinced that some approach to teaching would work, if only I could discover it. However, without having an experimental approach toward teaching, I would not have known how to assess the results of what I tried systematically.

Therefore, I think the most important lesson I learned outside of education classes was an experimental approach toward teaching. As a psychology major, I learned to observe and to measure behavior systematically. Although we usually took this approach with rats in Skinner boxes within laboratory classes, the science of observing and measuring behavior was ingrained in all psychology students at that time. One professor permitted me to take two psychology courses by independent study. Instead of attending traditional lectures and taking tests, he permitted me to conduct self-designed studies in schools. One semester, I investigated whether toys that had moderate novelty promoted longer periods of children's sustained attention at a Montessori school. Another semester, I studied the differences in personality development between children in a traditional classroom versus an experimental first-grade open classroom. (At that time, other education majors did not enter a classroom until their student teaching experience began.)

Regardless of my own experiences, I do not think students should have to leave education to learn to use the scientific method in teaching. First, I will explain how my experimental attitude helped me to teach children. Next, I will explain some of the methods I use to help cultivate that disposition within the educational psychology students I teach at the University of South Florida.

My First Public School Teaching Position

To help to illustrate why I am an advocate of the experimental approach, I will describe some of my early teaching experiences and how my experimental approach saved my students from a year of frustration. In 1974, my teaching career began at a school that bordered Appalachia in southeastern Ohio. Consistent with my previous education course training, when I first entered the school, I was given basal reading and math series plus a box of chalk with one eraser, one package of construction paper, a stapler with one box of staples, several reams of writing and drawing paper, and 33 first-graders to teach. After one week in the classroom, I knew something was wrong with the teacher scripts and stories in the textbooks I was mandated to use. I knew by observing my students' behavior.

When my children read stories that took place at the airport, in city parks, within a department store, etc., they mispronounced many of the words. They had difficulty pronouncing the vocabulary, not only because they lacked the decoding skills, but because the terms were completely unfamiliar to them. They looked away from the pages frequently. When I tried to engage them by asking about their experiences in those situations, their silence told me they had no experiences to share. When I asked them the prescribed questions from the teacher's manual, they gave me blank stares. Yet, they arrived every morning with rich stories to tell me about their own experiences. They told me about their new puppies and how they watched calves being born. They told me about their baby brothers and sisters. They told me about the police coming to take their daddy to jail. They had a lot to share, so my challenge became one of helping them to transfer what they already knew into symbols on paper that others could read.

The next approach I tried was to add books about baby sisters and brothers, animals, farms, etc., to the book corner, but I observed that few chose to read any of the books. I watched children holding books improperly. I realized that they probably did not have role models who read at home. I began to read books to them three times during each day. Although I initially thought teachers should read books to children that were more difficult than what the children could be expected to read themselves, I observed how my children's attention wandered after short periods of reading. Longer stories or chapter books clearly did not engage their attention. I tried reading shorter books (ones that I later read to my son at 18 months of age) with lots of expression, and they smiled and listened attentively. They asked if we could read another book after I finished reading the first book. When I read a book I had read before, they tried to say the words with me. Books with rhyme always resulted in lots of class participation, and when these books were placed in the book corner, I observed many children imitating my book-reading behavior there. They began to request books for us to read together.

Children dictated stories to seventh/eighth-grade honor students and parent volunteers who assisted in the classroom. Children then illustrated their stories with pictures. These stories were read more frequently than any other books that were in the book corner. Each child became the expert of his or her own book. Of the 33 children, 28 chose to write every day, and they eagerly read each other's work. The vocabulary in their stories and books required a much higher level of decoding skills than any stories with controlled vocabulary in the basal reading series. Yet, the children mispronounced fewer words.

At this point, some readers may think I should have had better early literacy courses in my college education program. Then surely I would have known these things about literacy development. However, I do not think a course that contained only information about literacy development and procedures to use to teach children to learn to read would have helped me to maximize my children's literacy development. Without training that motivated me to observe the children's behavior, I may not have learned which books and which experiences actually engaged my children.

When I later went to teach second grade at a school that contained a large percentage of children from middle-class families, they enjoyed very different types of books and experiences. They loved to listen to long chapter books that I would have thought were more appropriate for fifth- or sixth-graders. They cheered when I agreed to read "just one more chapter" before putting the book away for the day. They brought their favorite books from home to share with one another. They loved to write factual reports and conducted research on various topics. Again, it was my observations of the amount of time they paid attention, their participation with me when reading stories, comments made during stories, and their loud cheers that revealed what worked and what I should avoid in the future. Although classes on assessment are part of the education curriculum these days, many of these courses focus on skill assessment rather than on behavioral assessment. Knowing the sequence of skill development may help teachers to plan age-appropriate instruction, but it is only by observing actual behavior that we can determine what is individually appropriate or culturally appropriate for our children (see Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).

I think if teacher educators encouraged students to experiment with possibilities and to assess the results of what they did with children, they would be better teachers for the children in their classes. This is the disposition I try to cultivate in my students—an experimental approach toward teaching. Every class is different, and what works with one class probably will be quite different from what works with another class—even at the college level, where we also need to observe our students' behavior. In the next section, I will describe the experimental approach toward teaching, and then I will describe how I try to cultivate it within the classes I teach.

An Experimental Approach toward Teaching

Experienced teachers who have an experimental attitude toward teaching have a large repertoire of approaches. They have taught many different students, and they have figured out ways to reach different individuals. They initially formed a theory about how their students would learn and hypothesized that a particular approach would work best. Then they carefully observed and measured their students' learning. Finally, they revised their theory according to the results. This approach is the heart of the scientific method: theory, hypothesize, test, measure, and revise the theory.

For some reason, experiments, research, and the scientific method are perceived as four-letter words by many educators. Perhaps these words evoke images of people in white lab coats. Perhaps the scientific method was learned only as a definition to put on a written test in science classes. Perhaps some people had psychology courses similar to the ones I had, but instead of acquiring the experimental disposition, they focused only on the literal experiences of training rats in Skinner boxes. Perhaps those terms are perceived to be far removed from teaching real children in real classrooms. Yet, the early childhood literature is filled with images of teachers and teacher educators in the role of researchers and ways for teachers to cultivate an experimental disposition among students.

Lilian Katz (1995) recommended that when we try to help others with their teaching we "phrase suggestions in experimental form" (p. 261). Lilian Katz also described how teachers can help children to approach social situations with a "try and see how this works and let me know" approach rather than a "do this" approach. If the teacher only told the teacher candidate or child what to do, and then the person encountered failure, he or she would be likely to give up. On the other hand, if the teacher gives the person options to try and instructions to report the results, he or she will realize that there are many possibilities. The implication of having many possibilities is that it may be necessary to keep trying if one is not successful.

The early childhood professionals in Reggio Emilia, Italy, talk about the "teacher as researcher," and they encourage teachers to help children to test their own ideas. Carolyn Edwards (1998) described how a teacher in Reggio Emilia turned a dispute into a "hypothesis to test" (p. 194). The 5-year-old children were trying to decide how to communicate directions to 3-year-olds who would be entering their school the next year. Should the directions be drawn in pictures or in scribbles? The teacher suggested they prepare the two ways and see which of them would work better.

This example shows the scientific method in action within the classroom. The children had theories of how young children preferred directions to be written. One hypothesized that drawing pictures would be more understandable, and one hypothesized that scribbles would be more understandable. They tested their hypotheses by asking the 3-year-olds in the school to vote on one method. After obtaining the results, some of the children revised their theories. The younger children's votes showed that they clearly preferred the drawings.

I contend that an experimental approach toward teaching is appropriate at any level, and I have tried to cultivate that way of teaching by example within the educational psychology classes I teach. I strongly oppose teaching others to teach with a "cookbook approach." There is no right or wrong way to teach. Each method will accomplish different goals with different people within different contexts. There may be different short- versus long-term benefits or consequences too. In other words, the results depend on what one is trying to teach, to whom, when, and where. The key is to assess the results of what you do so you know what worked or what did not work. The remainder of this paper describes methods I use to help educational psychology students to learn to assess the results of teaching systematically.

Starting the Semester in Educational Psychology Class

How does one cultivate a climate for having an experimental attitude? I try to cultivate this climate from the first class of the semester. I will describe some of the methods I have used in my course EDF 3122, Learning and the Developing Child. I usually have 40 students majoring in elementary education (certified to teach grades one to six) each semester.

After reviewing the syllabus and providing students with an overview of the course during the first class, I give a short memory test. I have students check their answers and discuss their memory strategies to learn the words. I list their different strategies on the board. Next, I have them guess how many items a second-grader would remember and how they think she would approach that same learning task. After they guess (i.e., hypothesize), I show them a brief video of a child's performance. We discuss how the child's strategies were the same or different from what they expected. This first class example sets the tone and helps students to see the base for this educational psychology course: an experimental approach toward teaching.

Although this activity will later be used to address some content from the course, it seems disconnected. I never give students an advance organizer to see what we will be doing during the class time and how it is interrelated with course content. Although this approach is a poor strategy for teaching, I think it is important for students to have this experience.

At the beginning of the second class, I write an outline (i.e., an advance organizer) of how class time will be used. Again, we will be doing a memory task. However, the outline of the class shows students what the main points will be and how they are interrelated. In the textbook that I used previously, this topic was part of the chapter on classroom management. Now, instead of it being only a part of a chapter, students have the opportunity to experience it.

Before administering a memory task during the second class, students are randomly assigned to three different groups by having them draw a 1, 2, or 3 out of a folder. All three groups are told to listen to the 24 words (4 members of each of 6 different categories) I say and to write a number to represent each word. However, their tasks differ. The 1s picture each letter being written as a capital letter and count and write the number of letters that contain curves. The 2s listen to the sound of each word and write the number of syllables each word contains. Groups 1 and 2 are told that they should not think of the meaning of any of the words. They should only think about the way the letters look (group 1) or the sounds of words by syllables (group 2). (It is easy to determine whether groups 1 and 2 followed instructions by seeing the order of what they recalled. If they recalled words by category, they had to be thinking about the meaning of those words.) The 3s are told to think about the meaning of each word and to write a number that represents how pleasant or unpleasant that word is. After the tasks, everyone tries to recall the words. Papers are self-scored, and volunteers compute means for each group. After students learn why we did the memory task and which strategy was most effective for learning, we begin discussing the information processing approach. One of the main points of that class is to show that two people can spend exactly the same amount of time studying, but they will remember different amounts of material because of what they do to remember. This task helps me to show the importance of making information meaningful and how much easier it is to remember what is meaningful to us. I also use it to discuss the characteristics of true experiments.

Before the end of the second class, I ask students how the first class and the second class differed. Was one harder or easier and why? I show them the outline I would have put on the board for the first class and ask if their notes reflected that organizational structure. I explain what an advance organizer is and how it helps. Their observations usually support the points I planned to make. I explain my hypothesis that they would find the second class easier. If I gave them a test on their knowledge, I would expect them to remember more from the second class. If I varied the order and gave a different class the advance organizer for the first class and not for the second class, what results would they expect? I also reveal how I covered the content of the educational psychology course through the lecture, the demonstration, the discussion, and the process. All of these strategies support students' learning of different types of content. I tell them why I chose to lecture for some content, but that the learning is enhanced by active learning strategies, which I will demonstrate throughout the semester.

I try to model all of the different approaches that result from the theories we study and the vocabulary we learn. For example, I model an integrated curriculum. Though many college education classes preach using integrated curriculum with children, it is common for college classes to use a single textbook and proceed from chapter to chapter sequentially. If integrated curriculum really is more meaningful for students, why are college classes exempt? Whereas I used to use a single textbook, I now have collected a set of readings that I think are most integral to the important concepts that I hope to convey. Instead of discussing the applications of theories, I now infuse those methods throughout the course. Instead of having separate lessons on research methods, I now incorporate data collection and methodology throughout the course. In other words, I try to practice what I preach.

I include "living" material by mentioning editorials, cartoons from the day's paper, announcements about new legislation, and stories from conferences/meetings that I have attended. As I discovered from my readings as an undergraduate, education is anything but static, though textbooks seem to imply otherwise. My students are welcome to bring stories from their own experiences, and I always try to relate material that they bring to our content. Students can see how course content is alive in practice or legislation. For example, Florida recently passed a Readiness Bill, which relates to our content. I stress to students that a teacher must know the content of the course well in order to take advantage of spontaneous events, and I try to show the similarity of my accountability for teaching them content to what their future expectations will be with regard to meeting the state benchmarks or state-mandated test material. My course must prepare them to take the professional knowledge test for teacher certification. I must cover different theories of learning and development. However, the content never has to dictate the method used to teach it. My students and their learning determine how I choose to teach that content.

In addition to the careful selection of the materials that I use to communicate the content and how I choose to present that material, I inform my students of what other methods I have tried in other semesters and why I chose the approach I used with them. I tell them what I am learning about them throughout the semester, so they can see how I select methods that optimize their learning. For example, after an initial cooperative learning activity was a disaster with one class, I told them we would try "think-pair-share" in the next class to see if that strategy was more successful. Later in the semester, when we did a different cooperative learning activity with great success, I reminded them about the initial failure and explained that I realized that some classes may need to build toward that type of learning. I intentionally vary the method of instruction I use across classes and from semester to semester. We talk about the results and what I could do differently the next time I teach that same content. I carefully model reflective practice and the "I wonder what will happen if..." approach to teaching. I think teaching is one grand experiment, and the excitement we feel as we anticipate the results serves as fuel. I can honestly say I have never taught the same course the same way in 13 years of college teaching.

Making one's thinking overt helps students to develop their metacognitive skills. Bodrova and Leong (1996) said Vygotsky believed that children first learn interpersonally and later incorporate the tool of language for working independently. Perhaps my students will internalize my self-talk to become self-regulated teachers. When we only present polished lectures in our education classes, students infer that teaching is no more than saying a script. We need to tell students what we are doing and why we are doing it. We need to admit our mistakes and tell them how we plan to change that way of teaching in the future. How can we expect students to become lifelong learners if we never reveal our own learning?

Showing students not only what they think is best but also contradictory approaches helps them to learn that no approach is completely right or completely wrong. What follows is a more concrete example of what I mean when I say that my students can benefit when I use an approach that is contradictory to what they think.

During the first half of the semester, I employ many active learning approaches. For example, students analyze a case study in cooperative groups or take a test on moral reasoning before they learn Kohlberg's theory of moral development. Then, somewhere in the middle of the semester, I give a traditional lecture that includes learning theory vocabulary on operant conditioning. For the following class, students arrive in class to discover worksheets to do. I try to be serious when giving them their assignment, "Complete the worksheets by yourself. There is to be no talking. You have only 10 minutes to complete them, but please do not get out of your seats when you are finished." I walk around the classroom enforcing the rules, and when students ask for assistance on the two words that have not been taught previously, I say, "Do the best you can." When students ask if these will be graded, I reply, "Yes."

It always amazes me that students are so compliant and do not stage a rebellion at this point. Instead, they dutifully work on their worksheets, occasionally looking at me for clues about the unfamiliar terms.

After 10 minutes, we switch papers and score the quizzes. I ask them what they think they learned. I explain that I intentionally used a method that was very different from what we normally do, but I wanted them to think about its strengths and limitations. We discuss how well suited this method was for reviewing vocabulary, how the climate of the classroom differed in this type of instruction versus other methods, and why. One student admitted that she was relieved that I was "only kidding." She said she usually enjoyed coming to class, but she was beginning to regret coming to class today as she worked on her worksheets. We discuss their feelings when they encountered vocabulary I had not taught, and their feelings about my refusal to help them. We discuss the importance of cultivating dispositions for learning as well as teaching vocabulary.

We discuss how worksheets might be used in the classroom and what goals they might serve. Students realize that one big mistake that I made was giving the same worksheet to everyone. Some students knew all of the terms from a previous psychology course. These students finished within 5 minutes, and they had nothing else to do. This exercise was at best boring for them. It also wasted valuable instructional time. (I use this example to teach about engaged time, another topic that used to be covered in a separate chapter in the textbook.) Some students admit that they had not studied the vocabulary, and they felt overwhelmed. And, there always are some students who appreciated the opportunity to see how they were doing. The challenge and feedback was appropriate for them. I then reveal my own hypotheses about what would happen and tell why I started doing this activity. When I first started using this activity, I never expected anyone to value it. However, within one class, the majority of students wished we could do worksheets more frequently. They said they appreciated knowing whether they were right or wrong. They hated class discussions because they did not learn the right answer. It was at that point that I realized that different methods work with different students at every level.

The class that wanted more worksheets incorporated into their educational psychology class consisted mainly of traditional-age college students (i.e., 18 to 22 years old). They had few previous experiences with children, and they came from very traditional high schools, where lectures and worksheets were common. To meet their needs for learning the course material, I had to present more structured lessons and gradually build experiences with children and structured observations into my classroom. Asking them to analyze a situation was not a productive learning activity at the beginning of the semester. However, having them write what they thought before a class discussion or doing a think-pair-share resulted in more participation. Instead of condemning them, I had to find ways to reach them and then to work to challenge them. We cannot teach anyone if we do not form a relationship with them. If you condemn your college class for not meeting your expectations, you may as well be calling the school psychologist to find out what's wrong with students. Experimenting with different approaches and finding those that work with the group you have is a much more constructive approach.

After the worksheet exercise, I gave students a bingo game that used learning theory vocabulary. Every two students received a bingo card, and after I gave them a situation, they had to find the learning theory vocabulary on their bingo card. They were permitted to use books and notes. The prize for the winners was a coupon for 1 point added to the next quiz.

After playing the game, we discussed this method for learning vocabulary, and what the strengths and limitations were. We compared individual preferences for games versus worksheets. Some students did not like the chaotic atmosphere of the game. Some criticized the competition, and said this method was not appropriate for young children. We discussed alternative games without competitive overtones. Some students said they were more motivated to learn the vocabulary in game-like situations. There are always surprises in how individuals value or condemn any experience I offer them.

Encouraging students to look for the results of each method and to decide the merits and limitations in terms of learning, attitudes, and engagement helps them to think critically about teaching. Frequent quizzes systematically assess students' learning. After I demonstrate a method to my class, we decide how the approach could be modified based on what the outcome was. There are always people in class who prefer learning from more-familiar, traditional methods, so by discussing the pros and cons for individuals, students become more aware that they need to select approaches that match goals and children. No method is worthless. Some may be beneficial in the short term but detrimental in the long term. One can also overuse a good method so that it becomes ineffective. For example, I am tired of going to College of Education faculty forums during which I know we will be broken into small groups to discuss something and then report back to the entire group. Why not work in a large group sometimes? It would take half as long. Why not try a listserv approach for reviewing and critiquing proposals? When a method is overused, we become tired of its predictability.

A final component I incorporate into educational psychology is a class assignment/paper. Though the particulars depend on schools' and students' needs each semester, the purpose is to help students apply their learning with children. One option was tutoring. Students were given several different approaches to try when tutoring a child in reading. Students selected several to try and evaluated the results of each approach using observable behaviors. Then, after the eighth session, they tried to use whatever had worked while addressing the child's interests for the remainder of their time together.

Conclusion

To summarize, the most important lessons I learned that equipped me to provide instruction that was responsive to the children I taught were learned outside of my education classes. However, I do not think students should have to leave education to learn an experimental approach toward teaching. In the present paper, I have explained some of the ways I create a climate that encourages the disposition to experiment with methods of teaching content. First, I make my own thinking overt to develop students' metacognition. Second, I demonstrate both popular and contradictory approaches to help students realize that no method is completely right or completely wrong. Third, I continuously assess students' attitudes and learning from each method. Discussions that follow reveal individual differences among students. The benefit of using multiple methods becomes apparent. I do not think methods should be taught as absolutes. The type of content, actual students, one's goals, other methods one has tried or used, and the results all help to determine which method may be best for this particular situation. Without systematic assessment, one could not evaluate the outcome of one's efforts objectively. Finally, I practice what I preach. I use integrated curriculum and prepare students to take professional knowledge tests without sacrificing depth and engagement in the learning process.

In conclusion, I think it is important for teacher educators to avoid giving students the impression that teaching is a finished product. I think teaching students to apply the scientific method in teaching is the greatest tool we can offer them. The disposition to experiment and the knowledge of how to assess the results systematically will someday insure that future teachers will seek ways for all children in their classes to learn.

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International Perspectives on Early Childhood Education: Barbados and Mexico

Curriculum Reform in Mexico: Kindergarten Teachers' Challenges and Dilemmas

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Abstract

This paper examines some of the challenges and dilemmas faced by kindergarten teachers in Mexico as a result of recent curriculum reform. Influenced by the United States, the new curriculum emphasizes the development of academic skills and stresses the values of individualism and assertiveness. In addition, there is increasing pressure for "accountability." As a result of these changes, teachers are faced with the dilemma of administering a curriculum that emphasizes values that are in some respect opposite to the cultural traditions of Mexican families, with virtually no resources to support the effort. The kindergarten teachers participating in the study discuss their concerns regarding the conflicts between school and home, the lack of coordination among levels of education, and the change from a constructivist teaching approach to an outcomes-based approach.

In 1990, the Mexican Department of Education initiated an extensive evaluation of the national K-9 education program that led to the creation of a new curriculum. Implemented in March 1993, the new policy stressed the need to increase student retention, innovation, the development of children's academic skills, and the creation of national standards (Colosio, 1990; Beltran-Vera, 1990; Carranza, 1990). In addition, it attempts to decentralize education, modernize the distribution of educational functions, and encourages better collaboration between schools and families (Colosio, 1990). The policy also proposes to increase the national investment in education and make education responsive to the needs of the indigenous population (Carranza, 1990). As a result of the reform, all Mexican children must complete a year of kindergarten, six years of elementary school, and three years of middle school. To our knowledge, no study has been conducted examining the connection between kindergarten and elementary education in Mexico. In this paper, we describe the findings of a preliminary study on the dilemmas faced by kindergarten teachers and school administrators facing the new educational reform. The main questions addressed by the study were:

- What are the characteristics of kindergarten education?
- How is kindergarten taught?
- What are the dilemmas faced by kindergarten teachers in relation to the new educational reform?
- Are current political changes influencing in any way what happens in the schools? In what ways?

Methods

A qualitative approach was used to explore issues and dilemmas faced by different stakeholders regarding the implementation of the new K-9 curriculum. The data were collected over an 8-week period. The data consisted of semi-structured and open-ended interviews, focus-group interviews, and document analysis. Data analysis was organized around the main questions of the study (Stake, 1995).

The study was conducted in urban schools in southeast Mexico. The criterion for selecting schools focused on "What schools would help us to understand how well the new curriculum satisfies the needs of the different constituencies in a local community?" rather than "What schools represented the totality of the school types in the area?" Since the Mexican curriculum is highly centralized, this study in the southeast strongly reflects the curriculum being implemented in the schools of other Mexican states.

Participants were selected based on their willingness to collaborate in the study and their accessibility. The participants included the head of kindergarten education, school administrators, and kindergarten teachers. To validate our findings, we allowed participants to review the quotes and descriptions. We also used multiple data sources (observation, interviews, and document review).

Findings

Following is a brief description of preliminary findings that are organized around the main research questions.

What Are the Characteristics of Kindergarten Education?

According to official documents from the Mexican Department of Education, kindergarten education is designed to provide an opportunity for children to develop their creativity, their social skills, self-assurance, curiosity, and trust of their own abilities. In addition, children are expected to begin the development of their communication (oral and written) and mathematical skills. Kindergarten education also stresses the value of children's play and the role of children as primary actors in their own learning. By playing, "children explore and develop their physical and intellectual capabilities and reconstruct situations in their social and familial life. They also use their imagination, learn to appreciate the use of symbols, and develop their oral, graphic, and aesthetic skills."

The Department of Education as well as state and private organizations finance kindergarten education. Specific kindergarten programs have been designed for children of indigenous ancestry, and the Mexican state supports them financially. These programs are designed for children of diverse ethnic groups and are taught by bilingual teachers in the native language of the children.

In Mexico, there are three levels of kindergarten. The first level is for children who are between 48 and 52 months old. The second level is for children who are 53 to 59 months old. The third level of kindergarten is for children who are between 60 and 72 months old. With the reform, only the third level of kindergarten became required.

The new policy resulted in a change in the selection, preparation, and continuing education of teachers at the normal schools. Before the reform, preschool and elementary school teachers were prepared at the normal schools in a 4-year program after completing middle school. With the reform, teachers are required to complete high school before starting their professional training.

Prior to the reform, kindergarten education focused only on the social and affective development of children. Now, children are expected to acquire the basics for written and oral communication. (In some private kindergartens, children read and begin to write before entering elementary school.) According to the Mexican Department of Education, this requirement avoids the problem formerly faced in elementary school that takes place when children learn how to associate the letters with the sounds but they are not able to understand the meaning of sentences and words. The development of oral expression is necessary not only for academic purposes but also for improving children's social interaction outside the school. The development of early communication skills is especially important because of its relationship to later comprehensive learning of reading and writing.

Although elementary and middle schools are beginning to create school councils as a result of the reform, kindergarten schools have the same structure as they did before. In each school, there is a principal responsible for the administration and control of school finances as well as personnel administration, and a physical education and a music instructor who work with the teachers at the school. Each school district also has a superintendent who supervises technical, pedagogical, and administrative aspects of the schools; these supervisors are expected to serve as liaisons between the schools and the Department of Education. They are also expected to help schools to adapt the national and regional policies to their particular needs at the school level.

How Is Kindergarten Taught?

Teaching activities are to be developed around four areas. The first area is *affectivity* and involves the development of the child's personal identity, the teaching of cooperation and participation, expression of affectivity, and development of child autonomy. The second area is the *social* area and involves teaching children social cooperation and participation, national values, and family and community traditions. The *physical* area involves children's learning about space and time relationships, corporal notions, and logic. Finally, the *intellectual* area focuses on the understanding and learning of symbolic notions, math, language abilities, and the construction of logic relations.

To support kindergarten teaching, the Department of Education has developed new educational guidelines, such as a manual of children's activities and games, a guide for teachers, and another guide for parents. The manual of children's activities is organized into five categories: (1) games and sensibility activities as well as artistic expression, (2) psychomotor skills, (3) children's relation to and understanding of nature, (4) math-related activities, and (5) communication activities (oral and written). The guide for parents stresses the importance of kindergarten education for children's development and the role of play in the learning process.

Kindergarten teachers have to prepare an annual proposal of activities and games. In this proposal, the instructor has to address each of the four areas and can use the manual for games and activities developed by the Department of Education. According to the Department of Education, teachers have the freedom to use the manual or to choose other activities that they consider appropriate for the children. As the head of kindergarten education interviewed mentioned:

> Teachers have the freedom to use the guides and manual developed by the Department of Education; they can also select other activities that they think are more adequate for their children's needs. In the proposal, instructors have to show how the child will be able to develop in each of the areas, how the teacher will actively involve the children in each of the activities, and how she will help them to develop their creativity and autonomy.

According to this official, teachers are given the freedom to adapt this plan to the needs of their students:

> The instruction is not rigid, the teacher observes, asks the children for their participation, and focuses on what is best for them. A good kindergarten teacher is flexible enough to work around her children's interests and experiences. She involves them in projects that allow children active participation in their learning.

One of the principals added:

> The four areas are covered in the three levels of kindergarten; they are adapted to children's development and needs. What you do depends on the children. You also try to give them the opportunity to select the activities they want to do, so while some draw, others dance, etc.

The teachers interviewed provided some examples of the kinds of activities that they develop when teaching the children:

> Teacher 1: I do various activities when working in the different areas. For example, when working in the affective area, I may have the kids prepare their genealogy tree. They bring pictures from home, and then each of them prepares his or her own story to share with the class.
>
> Teacher 2: In the affective area, we also teach children to work in groups, collaboratively. We ask them, for example, to do something for Mother's Day in groups or to decorate the school for Carnival. They have to set the rules of their team, divide tasks, and organize. It is not just to teach them how to do something, but you use the process to teach collaboration.
>
> Teacher 3: Sometimes I ask my kids to tell me how many blocks they walk from home, then as a class, we draw a map and we draw where their homes are. In this way, they learn more than one thing at the same time.

> Teacher 1: Something that we encourage is the learning of cultural values and the importance of the community in the social area. We may organize field trips or ask the children to ask their parents to identify someone who is important in their community. Then, we invite that person(s), and the children interview the speaker. Of course, you have to work with the children first and ask them to think about what questions they would want to ask. Some children ask their parents for ideas, but many make up their own questions.
>
> Teacher 2: I use drama and stories when I teach the children about history or cultural values. Children may know this is the month of our independence, but they may not be sure what that means. You can create graphs, use drawings or pictures to create a mural about a historic event. This month we have two important celebrations on September 13 and 16, so we ask the children to ask their parents what the difference is between the two and we start working from there...
>
> Teacher 3: In the physical area, it is important for you to teach children about hygiene and about the environment. Sometimes you take them to the Red Cross; other times you have a speaker. There are so many things you can do...
>
> Teacher 4: In the physical area, it is also important for them to understand time and space relationships. You use drama, stories, poems, and the news, or maybe you work with something that happens to one of the kids. You use the experience to make kids think about what happens before, after; what the consequences are. Young children do not perceive details, and here is where you can help by asking questions that make the children think about them. If you ask them to solve a problem, you ask them to think about the answers as well as to reflect on the choices they make, and the consequences.
>
> Teacher 5: The intellectual area has become more important with the reform. In this area, we try to provide the basics for math and language learning. We may use drawings, riddles, games, tongue twisters. Children may already know some of the numbers, but you need to help them in relating numbers to objects. You can work with toys and make them count a collection; you can also keep them thinking about who did not come to class today and ask them to count how many are in class and how many are missing. We also organize the materials into areas and use this as an opportunity for teaching them addition and subtraction.

One of the principals who participated in the study also provided an example of an activity designed by one of her teachers:

> One of our instructors organized a math fair with her children. She is working with children whose average age is 5 years, 6 months. She asked the kids to investigate at home how math is useful to us. She then had the kids share their responses and used the group's thinking to identify some activities for the fair. Children were given the opportunity to choose an activity to illustrate how math is useful in their lives. Some children created a meter stick and began to measure different things; they also asked their classmates to guess what was longer or shorter. Another group started by weighing things; the kids brought different things such as candy, toys, etc. Then these groups weighed them with the teacher's help. At the end of this activity, kids built their own scales using a hanger and some soda caps. A third group played hopscotch with their classmates while counting. I especially enjoyed the theater presentation. This group of children decorated their own hall and decided to dramatize how math is part of their lives. They had a scene where the clock was ringing and their mother wakes them up to go to school. Another scene was about using money to pay for the bus or buying candy at a store. The best of all is that the children decided what they wanted to do, so it was more meaningful for them. This was a good way of teaching math as well as important for teaching them values such as collaboration, respect for other opinions, and so on.

What Are the Challenges Faced by Kindergarten Teachers in Relation to the New Educational Reform?

The teachers and school administrators identified challenges in relation to (1) role expectations and coordination between the schools and the Mexican Department of Education, (2) teacher and school traditionalism, (3) lack of continuity and compatibility between kindergarten and some elementary schools, (4) parents' negative preconceptions of kindergarten,

(5) limited resources, and (6) immigration and return migration issues.

Role expectations and coordination between the Mexican Department of Education and the schools. According to the Department of Education documents and the head of kindergarten education interviewed, one of the challenges confronted by kindergarten teachers is to recognize the capabilities of each child—to implement different activities that are flexible and appropriate for all children in her class—for small groups of children when working on teamwork activities and for individual children. Teachers also have to find new teaching alternatives when those used do not work well with the children. For all these reasons, kindergarten teachers have to be flexible enough to decide when and how to develop the classroom activities.

However, teachers felt that supervisors and Department of Education officials made it difficult for them to have this flexibility. As one teacher commented:

> In each school, there is a principal responsible for the organization of the school and its operation and management. Principals influence the activities that take place in the school. If they support the activities, there is no problem, but sometimes when an instructor wants to do something different, the principals do not encourage this. Indeed, although the Department of Education tells you that the manuals and guides are only suggestions, the reality is that they expect you to use the activities from the manual. They tell you that you can be creative and come up with other activities, but when you try to do so, you are discouraged.

One of the school principals mentioned:

> One of the strengths of the new curriculum is its continuity. Before the reform, we used to have a different educational policy and curriculum changes every time we got a new president. This has been the first time we have an educational reform that has lasted two presidential periods. The emphasis on an active role for children is also positive. However, one barrier that we face is the pressure for using the planned guides and manuals developed at the central level. While these guides are very good, there may be some occasions when students may need something different, something that is not included in the manuals.

Another instructor mentioned:

> Zone supervisors can also discourage you from trying something new. If they come to observe your class and they see you're doing something not included in the guides or the manual, they discourage you from doing it. The problem is that what you have decided to do may be more meaningful for the children than what is in the manual.

And another instructor added:

> You also struggle with the role expectations for children. We try to help children to be more independent and creative while teaching them to work collaboratively too. You struggle deciding how much you can do without creating a problem for the child when he goes to elementary school. In kindergarten, you also construct the curriculum around the child; in elementary school, the curriculum is already designed and rarely modified. You teach children to be independent, to come with different interpretations of different things, then they go to elementary school and this works against them. You want them to express themselves, to be creative, but when they go to elementary school, they want compliance. You also use poems, music, theater, and so many other things to teach them in kindergarten, but this doesn't always happen in the other levels of education.

Teacher and school traditionalism. Teachers and administrators stated that another challenge faced by kindergarten educators was the traditionalism of some elementary teachers and schools. As one of the instructors interviewed also commented:

> Although the new curriculum has been implemented since 1993, there are elementary schools where teachers do not involve children actively in their learning. In these cases, the transition from kindergarten to elementary school becomes more difficult for the children. If the elementary school teacher uses a traditional approach that expects a very passive role from the children, the kids suffer. We know various schools like this

> where the reform exists only on paper, but when the teacher is in the classroom, s/he keeps teaching as s/he has done it for 10 years...

Another teacher commented:

> We always receive comments from parents who tell us how children cry after a few weeks of elementary school; they ask their parents to send them back to kindergarten.

And another instructor continued:

> A few months ago, we were also told a very sad story of a little boy who graduated from our school. When he finished kindergarten, his parents put him in an elementary school that has a well-known reputation for its strong discipline. This little boy was very creative and active; he also had a lot of trouble adapting to his new school because that school uses a very traditional approach to teaching and has very strict regulations. In that school, children are not even allowed to run during their break. After a year, his parents put him in another elementary school. The new school has an approach to teaching that allows a more active role for children. The boy is doing well now, but the damage is already done; the child is now receiving self-esteem therapy. After he moved to his new elementary school, the parents came with the kid to our school because his sister is in the third-level of kindergarten. I remember I asked the little boy if he liked his new school; he told me that children in his new school may be crazy because they talk when the teacher is not in the room, they even move from their desks when the instructor is not around. You wish this didn't happen to any child...

A principal mentioned:

> Unfortunately, the traditional classroom remains a reality in many elementary and secondary schools. Not all teachers use active learning because this means additional work, or it is just a matter of teacher attitudes needing to change. Many of these teachers are used to lectures and ask children to reproduce knowledge rather than to construct it.

Continuity and compatibility between kindergarten and the elementary schools. Another aspect of the curriculum reform in elementary and middle school that is not very compatible with kindergarten is assessment. In kindergarten, student assessment is developed around children's learning and development, while in elementary and middle school, the reform encourages assessment based on certain predetermined objectives at the national level. The emphasis is not on the individual's or the group's needs but on the national standards. As one of the instructors mentioned:

> The way we develop our teaching plans and assess children in kindergarten is different from elementary school. In kindergarten, we spend the first 20 days of the year making a diagnostic of children's development and learning needs. Then, we develop a portfolio for each child and another for the group. Each portfolio includes different assessments and the instructor's observations. We do not use national or state standards to evaluate the children because each student and each group comes with different needs. The process is as important for us as the outcomes. But when the kids go to elementary school, things are different. The emphasis on outcomes in elementary school is putting pressure on kindergarten teachers to focus more on standardized outcomes than on the learning process.

Another possible incompatibility between the levels of education is the role of parents in the two levels of education. As a school administrator mentioned:

> In kindergarten, teachers have to work closely with parents. They need to establish close contact with them because this helps teachers to learn more about the child, about his/her family life, and the conditions under which the child lives. In elementary school, the role of parents is limited. They can participate in the PTA, but they are rarely allowed to be in the school unless they are invited.

And a teacher added:

> We work very closely with parents; we invite them to the school. They work with their children at home when we ask them to investigate something. They also come to the school and participate in different activities. In elementary school, parents are usually not allowed to go into the building during the school day.

Parents' negative preconceptions of kindergarten. Teachers and administrators stated that parents' preconceptions were another challenge for them when educating the children. As an instructor mentioned:

> Another barrier is parents' negative preconceptions of kindergarten. Some parents think that children come to kindergarten just to play; they have a problem seeing learning as fun, especially if they were taught in a traditional way and never studied kindergarten. So, you struggle trying to convince them that the kids are learning. Fortunately, over time, most parents value having their kids enrolled in kindergarten.

Another principal mentioned:

> Parents' beliefs are important; if the parents do not share the values taught to their children, it is a problem for the child to appreciate what s/he is learning. Parents are very important in making the work from school meaningful for their children. For example, we can get the children thinking about their communities and the environment, but if a family doesn't support these values, this does not promote children's learning.

Limited resources. Principals were especially concerned about the need for financial support and limited resources faced by their schools. They also added that these problems were made worse when the scarce resources led teachers to have limited expectations, especially when working in rural schools:

> Principal 1: The Department of Education pays teachers' salaries; schools can also request funding for improving their school and for building more classrooms. There are no resources, however, for materials that you can use for teaching. So the principals have to be creative in finding ways of obtaining funds to buy crayons, paper, glue, etc. Parents pay a small contribution, and this helps to buy these materials. The problem is that sometimes you cannot do many things because you just don't have enough resources. The good news is that teachers are so resourceful, they may use milk cans and paint them or create their own materials.
>
> Principal 2: In the rural areas, the conditions are worse. Schools and families have more limited resources, so it is harder for the instructor, although it depends a lot on the teachers.
>
> Principal 3: Some teachers have poor expectations when working with indigenous children in rural areas because of the schools' lack of resources. The children are less exposed to so many things, and they are very passive too. The problem is that if the teacher has low expectations this will not help the kids. There are no resources and, yes, you have cultural issues, but there are so many things you can do. One of our teachers was in a rural school before and received recognition for involving parents, community, and children in creating a garden with her school. Members of the community donated seeds and other harvest implements. The children worked with their parents and planted radishes, tomatoes, cabbage, etc. They later shared the fruits and vegetables among themselves and even organized a little farmers market to obtain some resources for their school. You can also use fruits and vegetables to teach the children addition and subtraction; you don't need to have something fancy to do that. You just have to adapt your teaching to the children's conditions.
>
> Principal 4: In rural schools, you also have to define the curriculum depending on children's needs. On one side, kids are more quiet and passive, but they are also more independent. Children walk to school on their own, which doesn't happen in the city. Teaching them to take care of their health is also more important in the rural areas.

Immigration and return migration issues. Because the community has been experiencing migration from their urban working class and some rural class citizens to the United States, teachers and administrators were experiencing some problems when children's language skills were below those of their peers or when they were not fully familiar with the cultural traditions of the community:

> Principal 1: In the past, you did not hear about people from this area immigrating to the United States. It tended to happen in other states, and usually the immigrants were people from the rural areas. The economic crisis of the country, however, changed that. I know about some neighborhoods where some members of a family left, and then gradually other neighbors followed

> them. So, it is happening here too, and that brings new issues when teaching the children.
>
> Principal 5: Some families leave and don't stay abroad. When they decide to come back, the children come to school with limited knowledge of Spanish. In kindergarten, it is not too much of a problem, but in other levels of education, such as elementary school or middle school, it may be a problem for the kids to keep up with their studies while working on their language skills.
>
> Principal 4: It is not strange to hear that kids who study abroad do poorly because they are not used to our educational system, their language skills are not as strong as ours, and they sometimes are not fully aware of the cultural differences.
>
> Principal 3: If the family has been abroad for too long or if the kids left at an early age, children become more acculturated to another country. Their families still keep some of our traditions, but the children are more used to the way they are expected to behave in the American schools. They also don't know how to interact well with their teachers and classmates. There are things that you don't read in books, such as how to interact with others or the intangibles of what is accepted or not. In kindergarten, we make a strong effort toward helping children to make an easier transition when they have been living abroad for a while, but it depends a lot on the school and the teachers. In other levels of education when educators are concerned about covering a certain amount of content or assessing outcomes, they may not be as supportive and this could affect the children's learning.

What Are the Dilemmas Faced by Kindergarten Teachers in Relation to the New Educational Reform?

The participants also indicated that they face dilemmas when the curriculum emphasizes values that are somewhat opposite to the cultural traditions of Mexican society, especially in the case of indigenous children. The principals and teachers who participated in the study expressed some concern regarding the emphasis of the new curriculum on assertiveness and individualism, especially in the case of indigenous children. As one of the principals who participated in a group session about the new K-9 curriculum mentioned:

> The emphasis on assertiveness can be problematic for some families, especially for those from rural schools. Rural schools have mostly children of indigenous ancestry whose families teach children to be obedient and respectful. If children become too assertive, this will be a problem because in their culture they are not supposed to question their parents' or teachers' authority. We can get in trouble because parents may think that we are trying to make children forget their traditions and challenge their parents' authority. Rural areas are usually more conservative too.

Another principal added:

> The way the curriculum is planned, it should not be a problem since we also encourage children's active participation in their learning. We also try to encourage them to investigate, and this is compatible with the goals of elementary school education. We, however, try to keep a balance between individualism and cooperation and focus on other important aspects of children's development, such as their social and affective skills.

The teachers also shared the principal's views, but they were divided in their opinions about introducing different values for the children, especially for those children living in indigenous communities. Some teachers saw the encouragement of assertiveness and individualism as positive because "this could help the children's possibilities of economic success within the main society." Other teachers, however, saw the change as contrary to the spirit of the reform. As one teacher mentioned:

> The reform is expected to be responsive to the needs of the different communities. The curriculum has included changes in the geography and history books, so they reflect more the context where children live. The problem with the emphasis on assertiveness and individualism is that ours is a society that sees individuals as part of a community for whom they have a responsibility. We teach our children to be autonomous but also to respect others and that their well-being is also related to the well-being of others. In the case of the indigenous children, changing them may

> result in creating problems between school and home. Parents may think that we are also trying to change the children's faith by trying to introduce selfish philosophies that go against their beliefs and cultural traditions.

The dilemma of adopting new values is important not only for the participants in the study and other Mexican educators but also for other countries where policy makers, teachers, school administrators, and parents must decide about preserving the values of their students or trying to change them in order to prepare them for a "better" future. Addressing equity issues is something most educational systems aspire to, but how to address equity concerns can be problematic. Would equity be served by providing all children with the same knowledge and learning opportunities? Should knowledge be customized to a particular group? Should we change the values of children and their beliefs to increase their possibilities of economic success even if this change could result in the destruction of their own culture or the creation of conflict between their newly acquired beliefs and those of their parents?

Are Current Political Changes Influencing in Any Way What Happens in the Schools? In What Ways?

The teachers and principals interviewed consider that politics have influenced what happens in the schools in positive as well as negative ways. They give an example of how the recent elections are influencing some decisions that may not be in the best interest of the children:

> Principal 4: Politics have a strong influence on what happens in education. Decisions about school funding or about what curriculum is covered tended to change with each presidential election. This is the first time a reform has lasted this long, so on the positive side, there has been some consistency. Some reforms are more sensitive to the differences among schools and the needs of diverse children than others. Some politicians educated abroad want just to replicate what they learned in other countries. The problem with this attitude is that something that worked well abroad may not work well for our context.

> Principal 3: The recent elections have created a lot of stress for some schools because officials at the Department of Education are usually designated by the president. Since the new president belongs to a different political party, some new schools that don't have too many children are concerned about how to justify the number of teachers they have. They are worried that a change of this nature could affect their funding if they can't justify the need for having a certain number of teachers, etc.

> Teacher 2: One of the problems with a political change in which the opposition wins is that there is a lot of anxiety when the school has not met all the requirements. For example, I know about two schools that have 10 to 12 children in each classroom and are worried that the new educational officials may not agree with this small class size. They fear the school may have to eliminate the number of groups and increase class size, which in the end will result in losing teachers. Now, they are accepting 3-year-old children to look as if they have enough children in the classroom. The problem is that these changes imply curriculum changes; you cannot teach 3-year-old children in the same way that you teach 4- or 5-year-olds.

> Teacher 3: I know a school where the physical education teacher was usually absent; now he is there every day. He is even testing the children to learn if they are left-side dominant or right-side dominant and keeping a file on this. So, yes, some teachers fear that their work may be lost. They don't know what is going to happen.

Conclusions

The study illustrates some of the challenges faced by kindergarten teachers in Mexico after the implementation of a new curriculum reform. Although some of these challenges may be unique to some particular schools, they have strong implications for Mexican institutions interested in improving the quality of kindergarten and elementary education. In addition, the study is of importance for U.S. schools with regards to reverse migration and standards-based education. Because Mexico is also one of the countries that provides the United States with a significant number of immigrants, further studies could also look at the profound implications for the delivery of educational services for these children (Chapa & Valencia, 1993; Moreno, 1991). The findings of the study may also, in turn, be used to facilitate future research on the knowledge, skills, and values promoted by the two educational systems and the use of strategies to better educate and place Mexican immigrant children (Moreno, 1991; Carter, 1996; Cisneros-Cohernour, 1996).

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A Reform Initiative: The Barbadian Experience

Barbara Parris

Abstract

This paper examines the reform initiative that is being undertaken by the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture in collaboration with Erdiston Teachers' Training College to improve the quality of education for all students in Barbados. The Education Sector Enhancement Programme, commonly referred to as EduTech 2000, seeks to accomplish this reform. The two main theories that underpin the philosophy of this reform program are the theory of contructivism and that of child-centered learning. The emphasis on collaborative forms of learning in the nation's classrooms will help students to live and work in harmony and develop skills in creative and critical thinking. With these skills, students will be prepared to function effectively in a technologically advanced society. This paper examines the four major components of the program—(1) civil works, (2) institutional strengthening, (3) procurement and installation of hardware and software, and (4) teacher training and technical assistance—and shows how each of these factors will contribute to the attaining of the reform goals.

This paper examines the reform initiative that is currently being effected by the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture in collaboration with Erdiston Teachers' Training College.

Universal access at both the primary and secondary levels of education has been provided by successive governments for the past 40 years for all students from ages 5 to 16. However, an analysis of the external examinations for a number of years indicated that about 30% of the student population leaving school had received inadequate certification in regional and extra-regional examinations.

It was also noted that there were general deficiencies among students in the areas of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In addition, it was recognized that preparation for the workplace should be a focal point and that educators need to be cognizant of the social and emotional needs of students. It is in this regard that the White Paper on Education Reform (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 1995) indicates that reform is necessary and that any reform that takes place should benefit the majority.

The foregoing is supported by John O'Neil (2000), who observes that school reforms are a product of the cultural, political, and economic forces of their times. In response to the question by John O'Neil (2000) and *Educational Leadership* staff as to what helps sustain a change in schools, Larry Cuban notes that, "One of the biggest factors seems to be that the reform reflects some deep-rooted social concern ... for equity, or for preparing students to lead fulfilling adult lives" (p. 6).

The above are in consonance with the statement expressed in EduTech (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 2000, p. 6), where the Ministry of Education states that "it is intended to significantly increase the success rate of the system by making it possible for all children to fulfil their potential, while preparing them for active participation in an increasingly demanding technological age." The document further states that it (the Ministry) is committing "itself to reforming the education system and to make it more responsive to national development" (p. 6).

The two main theories that underpin the philosophy of this reform program are the theory of constructivism and that of child-centered learning. Slavin (1997, p. 369) notes that the "constructivist theories of learning state that learners must individually discover and transform complex information, checking new information against old rules and revising rules when they no longer work." The author further observes that teachers must now teach "in ways that make information meaningful and relevant to students by giving opportunities to discover or apply ideas themselves and by teaching students to be aware of and consciously use their own strategies of learning."

Roblyer et al. (1997, p. 70) concur with this view. They write, "Learners construct knowledge themselves, rather than simply receiving it from knowledgeable teachers." The foregoing gives rise to the notion of child-centered learning, since it assumes that the child is at the center of the learning process. Roblyer et al. (1997) note that students work in cooperative groups instead of individually; and the teacher, instead of setting the goals and delivering most of the instruction, now arranges for required resources and acts as a guide to students.

Slavin (1997) supports the view postulated by Roblyer et al. (1997). He opines, "In a student-centered classroom the teacher becomes the 'guide on the side' instead of the 'sage on the stage' helping students to discover their own meaning instead of lecturing and controlling all classroom activities" (p. 270). According to Lucas (1999), one of the features of the constructivist classroom is multifaceted technology, which is used in order to develop a wide range of skills, dispositions, and concepts. It should be noted here that the integration of technology across the curriculum (with special emphasis on the computer) is one of the initiatives used to assist the development of child-centered learning activities.

The principal's functioning is critical to the advancement of the reform process. Costello (1997) indicates in his research that leadership is a key to successful implementation of technology. In this regard, he cites Mergendoller who posits that the "role of the principal is crucial in promoting school technology use ... organizational change research has consistently found that change efforts do not succeed without active administrative leadership, particularly by principals...." In this context, Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach (1999) remind principals that they should adopt a participative leadership style. They contend that "the substantially increased demands placed on school leaders by changing context and expectations could best (or only) be met by moving towards forms of shared leadership" (p. 12).

With special reference to the area of early childhood education and the use of technology, research data seem to favor the use of computers in early childhood education, but not before the age of 3 because computer use does not match the learning style of children under 3 years old. Haugland (1999) (who provides the theoretical framework for this section of the paper) observes that children younger than 3 learn through their bodies and are full of movement, changing focus frequently. In addition, these children are learning to master the developmental skills—crawling, walking, babbling, talking, among others—gaining control of their bodies and in the process learning about themselves and their environment. Haugland (1999, p. 26) cites several studies that point out that

> What teachers tend to do most (drill and practice) is the opposite of what is recommended: encouraging children to solve problems and be creative. Using computers with young children should be a process of exploration and discovery for both teacher and children.

Writing in the January 2000 issue of *Young Children*, Haugland cites her earlier research in which she argues that for computers to have an impact on children's learning, computer-based activities must mesh with children's educational goals. She contends that it is only when computers are integrated into the curriculum that children demonstrate gains in conceptual understanding, develop abstract thinking, increase verbal skills, and have gains in problem solving. She cites research that reveals that placing computers in classrooms rather than in labs is more effective in learning. Haugland (2000) maintains that computers empower young children. However, she cautions that if computer experiences are not developmentally appropriate, children would be better served with no computer access.

Central to the Education Sector Enhancement Programme is the training and retraining of all teachers and administrators in the educational system. This emphasis is of significant import since the program deals essentially with curriculum reform. This is not to suggest that the content per se is being radically changed, but the emphasis is on the methodologies.

Strawderman and Lindsey (1995) observe that the effectiveness of inservice training programs to prepare new and practicing professionals for the increasingly complex and diverse demands of public school teaching is a concern permeating all areas of education reform. They point out that some training programs are being restructured so as to provide teachers with the skills and knowledge to work effectively with all students.

The aforementioned authors also cite other researchers (e.g., Tymitz-Wolf, Landers et al.) who postulate that collaboration and teaming are critical to all school reform models. This view is largely at variance with current practice. Hargreaves (1994, p. 167) maintains:

> Most teachers still teach alone, behind closed doors, in the insulated and isolated environment of their own classrooms. Most elementary schools still have what Lortie described as an egg-crate-like structure to them; segregated classrooms dividing teachers from one another so they see and understand little of what their colleagues do.

In this regard, the Barbados model is seeking to encourage collaboration among tutors, student teachers, and school-based staff (*Erdiston Teachers' College Handbook*, 2000-2001). This stance is in consonance with the view expressed by Hargreaves (1994) as he argues that collaboration and collegiality are widely viewed as securing effective implementation of externally introduced change. He reiterates that the creation of supportive collegial relationships among teachers has long been seen as a prerequisite for effective school-based development.

Hargreaves and Fullan (1998, pp. 53, 76) effect a powerful alliance between the teacher and technology as they write,

> Teaching methods are one of the great rhetorical battlegrounds of educational reform.... New technology will insinuate itself into more and more aspects of our lives. The challenge for teachers is to turn this inevitable intrusion into a powerful tool for learning.

On examination, one notes that there are four major components to the Education Sector Enhancement Programme: (1) civil works, (2) institutional strengthening, (3) procurement and installation of hardware and software, and (4) teacher training and technical assistance.

Civil Works. Civil works involve repairs (extensive, where necessary) to 73 of the 105 public primary and secondary schools in the island. These repairs are necessary because the Barbadian school plant is very old, and periodic major renovations have not been undertaken. Attention will also be paid to electrical and security aspects. The refurbishment is being undertaken at the rate of about 20 schools per year over the duration of the program.

Institutional Strengthening. In order to manage the implementation of the program efficiently, there has been the establishment of the fully staffed and equipped Programme Unit (at the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture); the Shell Antilles and Guianas Media Resources Review Centre, where teachers can go to review and select available software and other materials; and a National Educational Evaluation and Research Centre set up at the University of the West Indies to assist the Ministry in carrying out its objective regarding the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the program.

Procurement and Installation of Hardware and Software. This component of the program will provide for the widespread introduction of technology into all of the island's primary and secondary schools and will include the provision of hardware, software, and the necessary networking infrastructure.

Teacher Training and Technical Assistance. All teachers in the system will be re-trained within the seven-year period in the areas of child-centered learning, special needs education, and the integration of technology into the teaching/learning process. The training, which is predominantly "hands on," will be inservice and, in some instances, site based.

Training (for two terms—full-time) is also provided for three persons from each school (School IT Leadership Team). This team comprises the Principal or Deputy Principal, the Curriculum Coordinator, and the Information Technology Coordinator. The teachers are invited to access training in the evenings after school. It should be noted that not only teachers and principals are being trained but also other support staff such as school secretaries, clerk-typists, secretary-treasurers (accounting officers), and library assistants.

Technical assistance entails training for Education Officers in the Ministry of Education, namely, School Supervision and Management, Curriculum, Testing and Measurement, and Audio Visual Aides units, relevant support staff, as well as Tutors from Erdiston Teachers' Training College.

In conclusion, in words from the White Paper on Education Reform (Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, 1995, p. 2), we in Barbados recognize that for us:

> The major challenges, which are in part the result of changes in the economy and the labour market, remain the improvement of educational quality and the reduction of the lag in the reform of the education system to keep pace with economic and technological change.

Consequently, the central administration (of education) in Barbados has embraced the view expressed by Hargreaves and Fullan (1998, pp. 7, 74-75) that

> Schools can no longer pretend that their walls will keep the outside world at bay.... We have no choice in deciding whether technology will affect us. The only choice is figuring out how we will change ourselves and each other to respond to it and turn it to our advantage. Educators equipped with a clear and sophisticated approach to teaching and learning can use technology to deepen, extend, and invigorate students' learning.

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Enjoying the Diversity of All Classrooms

Examining Multicultural Picture Books for the Early Childhood Classroom: Possibilities and Pitfalls[1]

Jean Mendoza & Debbie Reese

Abstract

Children's picture books have an increasingly significant place in early childhood classrooms. Picture books that depict the variety of ethnic, racial, and cultural groups within U.S. society (known generally as multicultural picture books) allow young children opportunities to develop their understanding of others, while affirming children of diverse backgrounds. This paper discusses the possibilities and the pitfalls involved in the selection of multicultural literature for use with young children, examines two books featuring Mexican American protagonists to illuminate issues and problems in the images the books present of Mexican Americans, discusses critical race theory as a way of understanding the possibilities and pitfalls of choosing multicultural picture books, and makes recommendations for educators and teacher education programs based on what is known about children's literature and critical race theory.

Children's picture books have an increasingly significant place in early childhood classrooms. Fiction, poetry, and nonfiction offer young children a multitude of opportunities to gain information, to become familiar with print, to be entertained, and to experience perspectives other than their own. Picture books that depict the variety of ethnic, racial, and cultural groups within U.S. society (known generally as multicultural picture books) allow young children opportunities to develop their understanding of others, while affirming children of diverse backgrounds. In this paper, we will (1) discuss the possibilities, which we conceptualize as positive, and the pitfalls involved in the selection of multicultural literature for use with young children; (2) examine two books featuring Mexican American protagonists to illuminate issues and problems in the images the books present of Mexican Americans; (3) discuss critical race theory as a way of understanding the possibilities and pitfalls of choosing multicultural picture books; and (4) make recommendations for educators and teacher education programs based on what we know about children's literature and critical race theory.

Children's Literature and Early Childhood Education

The growing role of children's literature in the lives of young children may be seen in the numbers of books published per year. In 1940, 984 books for children were published. In 1997, there were 5,353 such books (Huck, Hepler, Hickman, & Kiefer, 2001). In a study of picture books reviewed or recommended in *Young Children* (the National Association for the Education of Young Children's practitioner journal), Reese (2001) found a similar increase. During the 9-year period from 1945 to 1954, 37 children's books were recommended, while 904 were recommended between 1990 and 1999. This increase reflects a growing interest in children's literature and a growing awareness of what it can bring to the early childhood classroom.

Uses of Children's Literature: Aesthetic, Psychosocial, and Instructional

Children's literature can serve several purposes, some of which are aesthetic, psychosocial, and informative/instructional.

Rosenblatt (1995) categorizes readers' involvement in a text along a continuum. At one end is aesthetic reading, in which the person is drawn into the story and participates through identification with characters. The primary goal is enjoyment or entertainment. At the other end of the continuum is efferent reading, in which the reader is primarily interested in gaining information. In their relationships with books, young children may operate all along Rosenblatt's continuum, using books for both enjoyment and learning.

Literature is also seen as having several psychosocial uses for young children. In general, literature is said to provide characters and events with which children can identify and through which they can consider their own actions, beliefs, and emotions. Traditional literature in particular, such as legends and fairy tales, is sometimes seen as expressing common childhood psychological concerns (Bettelheim, 1977). Through the characters and situations in books, children are introduced to what the world may look like through others' eyes, and they can be given a chance to further develop their own constructions of self and the world.

Nonfiction, or informational books, help to foster an interest in inquiry and involvement in the world (McElmeel, 1995); they inform, instruct, and enlighten (Freedman, 1992). Nonfiction literature is expected to make clear distinctions between fact, theory, and opinion. Content must be up-to-date, avoiding stereotypes (Elleman, 1992) and outdated scientific content. An increasing number of informational books are written and illustrated in a manner that provides aesthetic as well as learning experiences.

One of the most persuasive rationales for sharing literature with young children is that it benefits language and literacy development. For years, researchers, teacher educators, parent educators, and parents have recognized the value of reading to children, and numerous studies document the beneficial effects of reading to preschool children (Scarborough & Dobrich, 1994). For instance, Wells's (1985) correlational study on the effects of picture book reading found that the frequency of listening to stories between the ages of 1 and 3 years was significantly associated with literacy and oral language skills as measured at age 5 by the children's teachers. Textbooks for future educators often include statements such as: "Reading aloud to children is one of the most useful ways of introducing them to the act of reading" (Krogh, 1994, p. 410).

The term "emergent literacy" began to appear in the early 1980s, as researchers sought to reconceptualize what young children know about reading, writing, and print before they begin formal schooling. Children as young as 1 and 2 years old are in the process of becoming literate (Sulzby & Teale, 1991), and the period of emergent literacy is said to continue until children read and write conventionally. This process can take place in the home, community, day care, Head Start, pre-kindergarten, or formal kindergarten settings. The concept of emergent literacy casts the child as a "constructor of his or her own literacy" (Sulzby & Teale, 1991). Children create meaning from environmental symbols such as McDonald's golden arches (Goodman, 1987), as well as the illustrations and conventional print found in books.

Contemporary recognition and appreciation of the child's emerging literacy is such that Saracho and Spodek (1993) assert, "All early childhood teachers, at every level, must now be considered teachers of reading, even if they do not offer formal reading instruction" (p. xi).

Picture Books for Young Children

Picture books are the genre of choice for sharing with young children, whether teachers read aloud or the children use them independently. In a textbook frequently used with undergraduate preservice teachers, Temple, Martinez, Yokota, and Naylor (1998) identify three types of picture books: (1) wordless books, which rely solely on illustrations to tell a story; (2) picture storybooks, in which illustrations and text work together to tell the story; and (3) illustrated books, in which the text supplies most of the information but the illustrations augment what is said or serve as decoration (p. 171).

Words and illustrations do not just tell stories. They also combine to create potentially powerful images of human beings in picture books. The child sees people—male and female, adult and child—represented in illustrations that help them form impressions of whatever sorts of people are being portrayed (Lukens, 1990). In a sense, then, any given picture book featuring people may have a didactic outcome, even if teaching was not the book's intent.

Multicultural Literature

When teachers share books with young children, they offer, among other things, exposure to ways of thinking about other human beings. For the child, illustrations and text combine to create particular views of individuals as well as groups of people—complete with messages about what those people are like.

Prior to the 1960s, people who were not European or European American were virtually invisible in children's literature, or they were depicted in negative and/or stereotypical representations (Aoki, 1993; Nieto, 1997). Harris (1993a) calls this trend "pernicious" (p. 60). This invisibility gained national attention in 1965 when the *Saturday Review* published an article by librarian Nancy Larrick titled "The All White World of Children's Books."

Sociocultural changes during the 1960s and 1970s fostered renewed interest in literature for adults and children that reflected "the diverse life experiences, traditions, histories, values, world views, and perspectives of the diverse cultural groups that make up a society" (Grant & Ladson-Billings, 1997, p. 185)—in other words, "multicultural literature." Taxel (1995) describes a trend toward addressing "the interests, concerns, and experiences of individuals and groups considered outside of the sociopolitical and cultural mainstream of American society" (p. 155). Initially, European Americans were the exclusive producers of new images of people outside the mainstream. This situation changed gradually—some would say glacially—in the ensuing four decades. With varying degrees of success, one can now find children's picture books written or illustrated, or both, by African Americans, Asian Americans, Latina/Latino Americans, and Native Americans. Interest has also grown in children's books with accurate, respectful portrayals of gay/lesbian people, women, people with disabilities, and religions other than Christianity. A great many of these books are put out by small presses and face barriers to wider use that will be mentioned later in this paper. Overall, there is still much room for progress.

Sims Bishop (1997) notes that multicultural children's literature can serve as a mirror and a window. A child may see his or her own life reflected in a book. Or he or she may have an opportunity to see into someone else's life. Historically, children's books have given European American middle- and upper-class children the mirror but not the window. They could see themselves in the stories they read and heard, but they were unlikely to see anyone much different from themselves. Conversely, children outside the mainstream have had few literary mirrors that affirm their identities, although they had plenty of windows on life in the dominant culture of the United States. Multicultural literature can reflect their experiences and identities, while offering all children a window into lives different from their own.

To take seriously Sims Bishop's (1997) mirror/window metaphor is to see that literature reflecting diverse perspectives is important not only for children from groups outside the mainstream of U.S. culture but for all students (p. 3). Advocates of anti-bias curricula assert that classrooms with young children need to stock books that not only accurately and positively portray the backgrounds of the families in the classroom but also extend children's awareness beyond to the significant groups in their community and the nation (Derman-Sparks et al., 1989, p. 12), in order to facilitate the children's budding understanding of the diverse world in which they live.

Literary Criticism and Multicultural Children's Literature

In *Playing in the Dark*, Toni Morrison (1990) undertakes an in-depth examination of the presence and absence of images of Africans and African Americans in the adult American literary canon. A related body of critical literature has developed that examines children's literature for bias, stereotyping, and other sociocultural misinformation. Taxel (1995) and others consider such criticism of children's books to be essential "[g]iven the complicity of children's literature, and the rest of society's cultural apparatus, in providing legitimacy for racial and gender-related injustice and oppression..." (p. 163).

These critics often focus on well-known children's books—including some winners of prestigious awards—to illuminate their points about Eurocentrism and related problems (Atleo et al., 1999; Moore & Hirschfelder, 1999; Kohl, 1995; Slapin & Seale, 1992). Using primary sources for historical and cultural information, they give voice to viewpoints not often heard in the world of children's literature. They raise issues of accuracy and authenticity, questioning the perspectives, and sometimes the motives, of European American authors and illustrators who tell stories about or on behalf of marginalized peoples. They also strive to enlighten the public about literature that offers accurate information and authentic insider perspectives.

This criticism is likely to be found outside the widely recognized journals. In fact, mainstream publications may be reluctant to include reviews that put forward what they consider "extraliterary" (i.e., political) criticism (Reese, 2000). In contrast, reviews in *Multicultural Journal, The New Advocate,* and *Multicultural Review* are likely to include examination of cultural and historical accuracy and authenticity in books they review. A number of textbooks (Harris, 1993b; Lehr, 1995) with similar purpose are aimed at future educators.

Popular but Problematic Books: The First Pitfall

Limited availability of criticism that addresses accuracy, authenticity, and related problems often leads to a major pitfall for teachers seeking multicultural books. Teachers are likely to be caught by the unexamined assumption that a book is multicultural and worthwhile if it has non-European-American characters or themes and is critically acclaimed in well-known journals. For example, Native American scholars Reese and Caldwell-Wood (1997) found several problems when they examined popular picture books written and illustrated by European Americans, in which Native American people or ideas play a central role. They found that the texts and illustrations together present a set of images of Native Americans, and thus a particular way of thinking about them, that is inaccurate and potentially misleading. The books in question received favorable reviews in the *Horn Book* and other mainstream journals, and they have enjoyed years of popularity.

One such book is *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky,* which features text purportedly by the late Duwamish leader Sealth (Seattle) and illustrations by contemporary European American illustrator Susan Jeffers. In 1992, it was among the top-selling books in the country—a rare achievement for a children's book. Its strong message of environmental consciousness may be the basis for its appeal. This award-winning picture book has two significant problems: one with the text, the other with the illustrations.

The text of *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky* has an interesting history. It is identified as part of a speech widely attributed to Chief Seattle of the Duwamish tribe of the North American Pacific Coast. The text presented in the book may, however, have strayed far from the original speech, which Chief Seattle delivered in January 1854. His message underwent several rewrites before becoming part of Jeffers's book. According to a state librarian at Washington State Library, different versions of the speech have appeared through history (Ellen Levesque, personal communication, September 29, 1993). The first one appeared in the *Seattle Sunday Star* on October 29, 1887, in a column written by Dr. Henry A. Smith. Because Seattle did not speak English, his words were translated into Chinook Jargon, and then into English. Smith reconstructed the speech from notes taken at the time.

In the late 1960s, poet William Arrowsmith rewrote the speech in a more poetic style. Later, screenwriter Ted Perry produced another rewrite for "Home," a historical epic about the northwest rain forest televised in 1971 (Jones & Sawhill, 1992). Perry constructed this third version as if it were a letter to President Franklin Pierce. In fact, there was no letter from Chief Seattle to President Pierce.

Brother Eagle, Sister Sky uses a shortened form of the Perry script, which was exhibited at Expo '74 in Spokane, Washington. None of these permutations of the Duwamish leader's original message is documented in the picture book, so readers and listeners are left with the impression that they are privy to Seattle's actual words.

Reese and Caldwell-Wood also see the illustrations as problematic. The Duwamish homeland is the northwest coast of the United States, and their clothing, homes, and means of transport reflect that location. Jeffers's illustrations, however, seem instead to represent Plains cultures, reflecting a common misconception among non-Natives that all Indians typically wore large feathered headdresses and fringed buckskin, lived in tipis, and rode horses. Moreover, all the Native people in the book are transparent, ghost-like figures. In contrast, Jeffers's illustrations of a modern European American family show them as solid and lifelike. This style suggests that Native Americans, in contrast to European Americans, no longer exist as a viable people; they are only memories. In summary, *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky*, although extraordinarily popular, not only seems historically inaccurate but also perpetuates stereotypes of Native Americans. The early childhood teacher who reads it to a class is presenting erroneous cultural and historical information.

Reese and Caldwell-Wood also consider authenticity in *Arrow to the Sun* (McDermott, 1978) and *Knots in a Counting Rope* (Martin & Archambault, 1987; illustrated by Ted Rand). They are not alone in their criticism (Slapin & Seale 1992). In *Arrow to the Sun*, author/artist Gerald McDermott misrepresents Pueblo social life, religious beliefs, and ceremonial practices (Reese & Caldwell-Wood, 1997); the protagonist in *Arrow to the Sun* goes through a series of trials in the kivas, but kivas are places of ceremony and instruction, not places of trial. This depiction is a serious misrepresentation of Pueblo culture. Perry Nodelman (1988), who is otherwise not especially critical of the book, notes that McDermott's uses of line, shape, and color in his supposedly Pueblo symbols differ in important ways from authentic Pueblo kiva art (pp. 94-95). This remaking of traditional art is visually engaging (it won a Caldecott Medal), but it fails to reflect the reality of either Pueblo design or religious belief (Reese & Caldwell-Wood, 1997, p. 175).

In *Knots on a Counting Rope*, Ted Rand's illustrations suggest primarily that the story is set in the Navajo nation, but his work reflects inadequate research into the culture. The book shows a mix of material culture from several different nations. For example, traditional Navajo men in the story are shown with hairstyles typical of the Atsina, Blackfeet, Mandan, and Piegan nations. Also, Pueblo people are shown at a horse race wearing traditional ceremonial clothing inappropriate for everyday wear (Reese & Caldwell-Wood, 1997, p. 177).

These three books are evidence that critical acclaim and representations of non-European-American cultures do not guarantee a book's status as good multicultural literature. No matter how engaging the stories, even subtle inaccuracies contribute to cultural misunderstanding and to potential discomfort for children whose cultures are inaccurately portrayed. Both the mirror and the window are thus distorted.

Two More Pitfalls

Observers of early childhood classrooms notice two other problems that frequently occur when educators look for multicultural picture books. One is the assumption that a single book about a group can adequately portray that group's experience. We see this situation, for example, in a classroom where observance of African American History Month begins and ends with reading aloud from a book about Dr. Martin Luther King.

The other pitfall is the mistaken belief that one can easily find a wide range of good-quality multicultural literature in libraries and bookstores, so that one has only to visit either venue to locate authentic and accurate representations of non-mainstream groups. Such books exist in growing numbers, but they are not so readily available as one might hope.

The following examination of two picture books featuring Mexican Americans attempts to highlight both of these pitfalls.

Picture Books Depicting Mexican-Americans

After the 1990 census, Mexican Americans were identified as the fastest-growing ethnolinguistic group in the United States. At that time, they constituted 5% of the country's entire population and 60% of the

Hispanic-origin peoples in the United States (Barrera, Liguori, & Salas, 1993, p. 207). These figures are not, however, reflected in the number of children's books portraying Mexican American people. According to a study by Barrera and Garza de Cortes (1997), the annual average number of Mexican American children's books has risen from approximately 6 between 1940 and 1973 to 19 in the period between 1992 and 1995 (pp. 129-130).

In the following two sections, we consider two picture books with main characters who are Mexican American: *A Day's Work* by Eve Bunting (1994), illustrated by Ronald Himler; and *A Gift from Papa Diego* by Benjamin Alire Saenz (1998), illustrated by Geronimo Garcia. For each book, the plot will be summarized and the text/illustration relationship examined to find what each book offers children in the way of a mirror or a window on Mexican American cultural experience.

A Day's Work

When *A Day's Work* begins, Francisco and his grandfather stand with other day laborers in a parking lot, waiting for work. Francisco is a boy of indeterminate age, perhaps between 8 and 10. In the second paragraph, he reveals three facts to this group of strangers: first, that his father has died, leaving his family in financial trouble; second, that his grandfather has recently arrived in the United States to help them; and third, that he plans to use his own English skills to help his Spanish-speaking grandfather find work.

Without telling his grandfather, Francisco decides to lie to an employer about his grandfather's skill as a gardener. He and his grandfather hurry to the employer's van, and the boy pushes away another man who tries to get in with them. The employer, Ben, takes them to an embankment to pull weeds and drives away. The two work all day in the hot sun. As they are congratulating themselves on a beautiful job, Ben returns and is outraged to find that they have pulled all his ice plants and left the weeds. Over Francisco's protests, Abuelo offers to repair the damage and remove the weeds without pay. Ben sees that Abuelo is honorable, allows them to come back the next day, and hints that he might hire the grandfather for more than just day labor. Reflecting that "he had begun to learn the important things, too" (p. 32), Francisco takes his grandfather's hand and leads him homeward through a golden cityscape.

Himler's watercolor and gouache illustrations are expressive and evocative, with a kind of gravity that sometimes hints at threat or overwhelming situations. When children look at these illustrations, they see Mexican Americans who:

- Wait for work
- Scramble for work
- Lie to get work
- Push others out of the way to get work
- Are taken somewhere to work
- Work close to an area of high-priced homes
- Work hard and make a serious mistake
- Rest after working, not knowing they have made the mistake
- Are scolded by an employer
- Feel ashamed, dismayed, at fault
- Seek to correct the mistake
- In adulthood, assert moral leadership
- Are allowed by the employer to correct their mistake
- Face the consequences of their actions, thereby winning the employer's respect
- Are at a disadvantage if they do not speak English
- In childhood, mediate between adults who speak English and those who speak Spanish
- Walk home together
- Are males in a male work world

A Day's Work is entirely in English, with the exception of the words abuelo, senora, gracias, bueno, and two two-word phrases. The text refers to Abuelo's having come from Mexico but does not specify what part of the country. There is a reference to the tortillas Francisco's mother sends for their lunches and to the chorizo the boy wants to buy with their earnings. Abuelo praises Francisco's English skills. We see the kind of role reversal some immigrant families experience, in which a child who is able to speak English becomes a go-between for the family and the dominant culture (Wong Fillmore, 1991). One also sees the boy taking the lead in finding work, to the point where he lies and pushes away a full-grown man in order to get it. Although Francisco's mother is mentioned, readers see and hear only males in this representation of Mexican Americans—hard-working manual laborers.

A Gift from Papa Diego

A Gift from Papa Diego is the story of 6-year-old Diego, who lives in El Paso, Texas. He loves and identifies closely with his paternal grandfather, who lives far away, across the border in Chihuahua. This book is a bilingual parallel book; each page has both English and Spanish versions of the unfolding story. Little Diego lives with his parents and his teasing older sister in a house with a yard. He wants nothing more than to be with his abuelo on his 7th birthday. When a conversation with his father shows that he's not likely to get that wish, Little Diego begs for a Superman costume because he believes it will help him fly to Papa Diego. On his birthday, his family wakes him with a traditional song and he goes off to school imagining how he will fly to Chihuahua if only he receives that costume as a gift. That evening, he does get the costume, but his hopes are dashed when (of course) it does not help him fly. He retreats to his room. When his father invites him to rejoin the family, he does—and finds Papa Diego in the kitchen. Their reunion is joyful.

At the end of the book is a page of notes about the places in the book, a glossary of Spanish terms, and an author-illustrator biography page. The illustrations are photographs of three-dimensional painted terra cotta creations. The mood is light, cheerful, but with a solid, substantial feeling. Children who look at these pages see Mexican Americans who:

- Think about things and explore the world
- Have father-son talks about family issues
- Hug each other
- Wear a tie to work
- Read
- Imagine and daydream
- Long to cross a border that separates them from loved ones
- Have family conversations while preparing food
- Experience sibling rivalry
- Play the guitar and sing to a loved one
- Greet each other with affection
- Act on a mistaken idea, with no harm done
- Do kind things for others
- As adults, are sources of love and guidance
- As children, play, go to school, and interact with family members
- Eat together as a family
- Are in all stages of life: infant/child/parent/grandparent
- Are female, are male
- Write books or illustrate them

A Gift from Papa Diego contains detailed, culturally specific information about language and customs, both in the story and in the glossary at the end of the book:

- the Spanish text and the Spanish phrases embedded in the English text,
- the mention of four specific foods,
- family discussions of Chihuahua and the U.S-Mexican border, and
- the special birthday song Little Diego's family sings.

All are cultural markers, indicators that in fact this story is about a Mexican American family. Males and females alike have important roles. The story seamlessly shows how central their culture is in their daily lives.

A Day's Work integrates a few Spanish words and refers to two specific foods. It does not mention a specific area of Mexico or relate specific customs (such as the birthday song in *Papa Diego*). It counters the "lazy Mexican" stereotype and offers a look at the socioeconomic problems faced by Mexican American immigrants, particularly those who do not know English. Its principal focus seems to be on working to survive, and on the moral lesson about honesty.

The Second Pitfall: Believing a Single Book Is Adequate

We believe the contrast between the two books shows what a difference an insider perspective can make. It is in the authors' approaches to language that we see the most striking contrast between the two books. With text in two languages and embedded references to the desirability of speaking both, *Papa*

Diego overtly supports—even invites—dual-language fluency. In *A Day's Work*, Francisco is praised for his English skills, and Abuelo "doesn't speak English *yet*" [italics added]. None of the employers, including Ben, seems to know any Spanish. Spanish fluency is presented as unimportant or even unnecessary. In fact, not knowing English is implicitly the root, so to speak, of the trouble Francisco and his grandfather have. Abuelo cannot tell that Francisco has lied to persuade Ben to hire them, and he cannot communicate with Ben about the gardening job. He is completely dependent on his grandson to negotiate these transactions. Bunting's portrayal of Abuelo's predicament may—intentionally or not—be situated within the politicized discourse on language in the United States.

A Day's Work is actually a socially conscious morality tale, presented as a story about a boy and his grandfather. Every major review of *A Day's Work* stresses the moral lesson about not telling lies and about making reparations after creating a problem. Teachers report using the book specifically to generate discussion about honesty. Bunting is known for her portrayals of people, particularly non-European-Americans, who live in poverty; it seems likely that in *A Day's Work* she means to make a statement (arguably a positive one) about Mexican Americans in U.S. society. *A Gift from Papa Diego*, on the other hand, is a story about a boy and his grandfather—a story about love and familial devotion. We contend that Saenz and Garcia's picture of Mexican American culture has more depth and complexity than does the one created by Bunting and Himler. Both are pictures of Mexican Americans, but if one were looking for a detailed portrayal of Mexican American life, *Papa Diego* would seem to be the preferred option.

One of the authors had a conversation with a Latina student who objected to *A Day's Work*. She felt that its outsider perspective resulted in images that fed into the stereotype of Mexican American men as manual laborers. Although it seemed sympathetic, it still made them none too bright. Not being able to tell a weed from a desirable plant, she said, made Francisco and his grandfather look unnecessarily and unrealistically stupid. She asserted that a Mexican American child reading or hearing this book would likely feel embarrassed. Unimpressed by the fact that *A Day's Work* was named "A 1994 Americas Commended Title" by the Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs, she decided its problems outweighed any merits it had, and she would use several other books in her classroom instead (A. Herrera, personal communication, March 23, 2000). Whether or not one agrees with this future teacher's rejection of *A Day's Work*, her response shows awareness of critical issues and a commitment to providing authenticity and accuracy.

She also avoids a common error teachers make when choosing multicultural picture books: the assumption that a single book can adequately portray any group's experience. We would not propose that *Papa Diego* alone is adequate to portray Mexican Americans for young children, of course; Little Diego's family's white-collar lifestyle is by no means the whole story of Mexican American life. One would need to seek out other titles to create a collection that provides an adequate window and an undistorted mirror.

Availability: A Third Pitfall

Mention of the search for titles brings us to discussion of another pitfall of selecting multicultural picture books: the belief that accurate and authentic books with insider perspectives are readily available. Recognition and availability are significant factors in finding and using multicultural children's books. Availability has little to do with literary content but may affect whether a teacher even knows a book exists.

For instance, when preparing this paper, Jean Mendoza needed copies of *A Day's Work* and *A Gift from Papa Diego*. She had the following experiences:

- The local library system had four copies of *A Day's Work*, all of which were checked out until the following week. Two nearby towns also had copies on the shelf.
- The local library had one copy of *A Gift from Papa Diego*, and it was on the shelf. Mendoza became the first patron to check it out.
- The person who answered the phone at a local bookstore exclaimed, "Beautiful book!" when asked if they had a copy of *A Day's Work*. They

had more than one copy in stock. She did not need to look up this information in the computer.

- The bookstore employee who was so enthusiastic about *A Day's Work* had never heard of *Papa Diego*. She looked it up in the computer and said, "We don't stock it, but I can order it for you."

These experiences are by no means unique. Nor are they surprising, given the nature of the publishing and book-selling businesses. Eve Bunting's position in the world of children's literature is such that her books get instant recognition. She has published over 100 books from the 1970s to the present. Ronald Himler is also well known; he sells his book illustrations on his Web site. Bunting and Himler do their work for major publishing houses. *A Day's Work* is put out by Clarion Books, a division of publishing giant Houghton Mifflin Company.

Benjamin Saenz and illustrator Geronimo Garcia do not garner the same recognition. *Papa Diego* is the first children's book for Saenz, primarily a writer of poetry and adult fiction. Garcia works as a commercial artist in Texas. Cinco Puntos, their publisher, is a small press with a deep connection to Latina/Latino communities. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) recently withdrew a $15,000 grant to Cinco Puntos when the NEA discovered one of their titles was by Subcomandante Marcos, controversial leader of the Zapatista resistance in Chiapas, Mexico (Hilgers, 2001). According to their online catalog, they nonetheless plan to put out another book by Marcos.

Both *Papa Diego* and *A Day's Work* were favorably reviewed in *Horn Book* and other major publications. A librarian at the local library was impressed enough by *Papa Diego* to order a copy, but it remained on the shelf while all copies of *A Day's Work* were in use. A bookstore employee told one of the authors that the store can keep a book for only six months; after that it is returned to the publisher. If the book is not visible, despite positive reviews, potential buyers will not be able to browse through it during their selection processes, and chances are they will not know it exists.

We have discussed three problems teachers may encounter when seeking multicultural picture books for young children. Highly acclaimed books that portray groups other than European Americans, such as the Native American themed books mentioned earlier, may perpetuate stereotypes and mistaken ideas. Similarly, as shown in the discussion of two books about Mexican Americans, a single book is unlikely to give an adequate picture of any given culture. Finally, a teacher's search for high-quality multicultural books may be hampered by lack of author/illustrator recognition and lack of access to good books from small presses with tiny marketing budgets.

Critical Race Theory: A Lens on Children's Literature

Stereotyping, bias, and cultural misinformation continue to appear in text and in illustration in children's books. Why is this the case, even in newer literature? Why do reviewers fail to note problems with accuracy and authenticity? Why do problematic books remain on the shelves of libraries and bookstores, while more authentic titles are absent or unrecognized? Why do teachers continue to select and use books with cultural misinformation?

A developing theoretical perspective explains why such problems recur. Scholars such as Gloria Ladson-Billings (1998) and William F. Tate (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) use critical race theory (CRT) as a framework for discussing the impact of race and racism in all aspects of education. CRT has its roots in critical legal studies, which examine extralegal social, economic, and political factors that affect the legal system. Delgado (1995) describes the endemic nature of racism in American society. Racism, according to CRT, is not a series of isolated incidents. It is embedded in American society, institutionalized, so deeply ingrained yet often so subtle that the society's members often cannot see it. In particular, people of the mainstream do not see it. In effect, European American middle-class people learn, from early childhood on, not to recognize racism and to ignore or dismiss the voices that raise discussions about it or any other form of oppression. As a result, those voices are muted and marginalized—including those of European American middle-class people who speak out.

It should be noted that critical race theory does not assume that individuals in groups outside the mainstream are insightful about the role of race, power, and privilege in their own lives. Given the often subtle nature of racism and other oppressions, any member of society could fail to see them in a given situation.

Critical theorists McCarthy and Crichlow (1993) point out that minorities do not have central control over the production of images about themselves in society. According to CRT, then, bias and cultural misinformation are part of children's literature because people outside the mainstream have historically not been in control of image production. Nor have they been in positions of power when it comes to distribution or evaluation. European Americans, who own the largest publishing houses and continue to dominate the key decision-making positions, are likely to be blind to the role of race and privilege in the choices they make. What will be published, who will illustrate it, how it will be marketed—those decisions are not, for the most part, in the hands of people from groups outside the mainstream.

Criticism of children's literature, too, has historically been the domain of European Americans. Review journals such as the *Horn Book* and *School Library Journal* are run by European Americans. Works by European American writers and illustrators continue to dominate the lists of winners of the two oldest prestigious awards, the Caldecott and Newbery Medals. A slowly growing field of awards focused on non-mainstream books is able to bring attention to other works: the Coretta Scott King Award, the Tomás Rivera Award, the Pura Belpré Award, and, most recently, the New Voices Award are examples.

Teachers and others who select books for young children also are predominantly European American. According to critical race theory, they are likely to have trouble seeing deeply embedded problems in the literature they choose, and they are equally unlikely to hear the voices of those who may be raising concerns about stereotypes, bias, or racism in particular works.

Recommendations

Critical Race Theory as a Tool

Critical race theory, as a tool of both deconstruction and construction, has a powerful potential role in helping early childhood professionals and teacher educators deconstruct oppressive structures and discourses. It can lead to awareness of how to construct equitable relationships within society and work toward deconstructing unearned privilege and ending marginalization.

Implementation of anti-bias curriculum is a significant current of reform in early childhood education today. The anti-bias curriculum has its roots in a theory that oppressions such as racism and sexism arise from and are perpetuated by ignorance about and fear of difference. It takes an activist stance on bias, justice, and fairness, based on the assumption that modeling, intervention, and teaching can move children toward attitudes necessary to get on well in an increasingly diverse world. It directs the teacher to critically examine the classroom environment and make changes that affirm diversity. The anti-bias paradigm locates the site of social change in the early childhood classroom and curriculum.

Although Louise Derman-Sparks and the other authors of *The Anti-Bias Curriculum* (1989) do not intend it as a recipe book for "doing multiculturalism," it is often used that way by teachers who want to have classrooms without bias. It is relatively simple to put culturally affirming posters on the walls and dolls with different skin tones in the dramatic play area, but much more is necessary. We argue that the more powerful site of change resides within the teacher or caregiver and his or her knowledge of privilege, power, and institutional racism. The educator is the one who facilitates the classroom atmosphere, who decides how to intervene when children exhibit biased behavior, who selects the literature, who directs children's attention toward (or away from) images that further their understanding of other people and themselves.

For Understanding Children's Literature

Critical race theory affords a different perspective on illustrations and text than is traditionally taken with children's picture books. Hade (1997) notes, "The meanings we hold about race, class and gender (many of which may be stereotypes) mediate how we interpret text" (p. 235). Thus one must attend closely to the "less-discussed premise that cultural awareness and understanding are prerequisites for the development and use of multicultural literature" (Barrera, Liguori, & Salas, 1993, p. 205).

Critical race theory can facilitate "reading against the grain" at a deep level, providing both a rationale and the skills for selecting books that give voice to people who have been marginalized. Reading against the grain is described as "a way to examine the unexamined, question the unquestioned, and hold up to scrutiny the unspoken assertions the text is making about the way lives are lived in society" (Temple, Martinez, Yokota, & Naylor, 1998, p. 43). It entails interrogating the literature based on such questions as:

- Are characters "outside the mainstream culture" depicted as individuals or as caricatures?
- Does their representation include significant specific cultural information? Or does it follow stereotypes?
- Who has the power in this story? What is the nature of their power, and how do they use it?
- Who has wisdom? What is the nature of their wisdom, and how do they use it?
- What are the consequences of certain behaviors? What behaviors or traits are rewarded, and how? What behaviors are punished, and how?
- How is language used to create images of people of a particular group? How are artistic elements used to create those images?
- Who has written this story? Who has illustrated it? Are they inside or outside the groups they are presenting? What are they in a position to know? What do they claim to know?
- Whose voices are heard? Whose are missing?
- What do this narrative and these pictures say about race? Class? Culture? Gender? Age? Resistance to the status quo?

The roots of this type of reading against the grain go back several decades. In 1948, for example, the National Council of Teachers of English published *We Build Together*, which featured "Criteria for Judging Books about Negroes for Young People" (Rollins, 1948, p. 4), a list of questions much like those listed above.The Council on Interracial Books for Children created *Guidelines for Selecting Bias-free Textbooks and Storybooks* in 1980; it serves as a model for similar documents today.

The point of reading against the grain is not to find "perfect" multicultural books. There is no such thing, nor is it likely that there are any books that are free of ideology. The purpose is to help illuminate the places that bias, stereotypes, and misinformation might be hidden—hidden, perhaps, even from the authors and illustrators who produce the images.

For Early Childhood Teacher Education

A key factor in being able to pose and answer these questions is the teacher's knowledge of self and racism (and other oppressions). McIntosh (1998) and others assert that people who live with unearned privilege learn to be blind to it. Assumptions about others and self may be deeply ingrained, and interrogating them takes both courage and purpose. One must not underestimate the challenges of deconstructing one's own problematic attitudes and beliefs, or of guiding others to do so. Multicultural children's literature "is only as culturally enlightened as the people who create it and use it" (Barrera, Liguori, & Salas, 1993, p. 235). Future educators need to notice and identify the problems within books such as *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky* or the differences between *A Gift from Papa Diego* and *A Day's Work*. They need to be able to talk about what they notice with others who also select and present literature as a medium for instruction.

This discussion points to a need for early childhood teacher education programs that provide students with significant opportunities to read and discuss the critical perspectives on ideology, representation, and identity in literature, particularly multicultural literature. This goal may best be realized as a separate course designed to use literature (especially children's literature) as a vehicle to explore issues of bias and power relations in U.S. society.

Here is where critical race theory can be most useful in the teacher training experience. Statistics show that, nationally, the overwhelming number of young women and men in early childhood teacher education programs are European American. They are likely to have grown up in insulated environments that did not provide the opportunity, the necessity, or the tools for interrogating relations of power and privilege.

We suggest that colleges of education reconceptualize the foundations on which early childhood professional preparation rests—shifting from the child-developmental paradigm that has dominated to one that has as a major component the teacher's developing understanding of self, including awareness of the role that race and privilege play in identity. Such a model has precedents in other professional clinical programs, including social work or counseling psychology, which often require a "didactic therapy" or self-awareness component in addition to extensive coursework on theory and practice, as well as practicum experience.

For the Present

Such change will be a long time coming. Meanwhile, inaccurate and inauthentic images remain in the picture books in libraries, bookstores, catalogs, and classrooms. What can be done now?

Early childhood teachers and teacher educators constitute a community that uses children's literature in educational contexts, and members of this community must read the critical literature about multicultural books. In her textbook *Children and Books*, Zena Sutherland (1991) writes, "The professional teacher, librarian, reviewer, or editor should know both the books themselves and the critical literature, since criticism entails making judgments that ought to be informed and objective" (p. 25).

As teacher educators, we recommend telling preservice teachers, "You would not knowingly share literature with children that gave them false information about science or math, because it would damage their understanding of the world. You have a similar obligation not to condone or present false or misleading information about groups of people in the literature you share. In fact, you have an obligation to actively present the alternative: accurate, authentic images of all the people of the world. This practice is in the best interests of all your students—those who grow up 'in the mainstream' of U.S. society and those who belong to other groups."

If preservice and novice teachers are to interrogate literature effectively, they need to be aware of critical reviews that touch on issues addressed in critical race theory, the majority of which are found outside of the mainstream publications. They can look to journals such as *Multicultural Review*, *Multicultural Education*, and *The New Advocate*. They can also become familiar with more specialized publications such as *Studies in American Indian Literature*, *African American Review*, and *Asian Perspectives*.

Teacher educators can also acquaint their students with smaller publishers such as Cinco Puntos (focusing on Latino/Latina literature), Lee and Low (owned by Asian Americans), and resources such as Oyate (focusing on Native American literature) as potential sources of books with insider perspectives. Teachers need to know they need not settle for images that mislead and miseducate. For example, we advocate replacing the outsider perspectives and inauthentic portrayals of Native American life in *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky*, *Knots on a Counting Rope*, and *Arrow to the Sun* with books such as *The Good Luck Cat* by Joy Harjo and *Jingle Dancer* by Cynthia Smith (both Muscogee Creek). These books provide substantial views of contemporary Native Americans as people who live in modern houses, hold down jobs, have pets, and honor their culture in a manner different from that of most other Americans.

Conclusion

The ultimate goal of the changes we suggest is to produce teachers who construct equitable and socially just relationships of power and can help their students do so, as well. It may be impossible to do this on a large scale without the significant reforms to teacher education mentioned above. Individual teacher educators can, however, take action in the present even without institution-wide support. Some theorists have identified a continuum of awareness in whites' racial identity and related behavior (Lawrence & Tatum, 1998), and teacher educators can use this and related knowledge when working with preservice teachers around matters of race, power, and privilege (Sleeter, 1998). Of course, teacher educators must also use the same knowledge to inform their own understandings of race and privilege in society. It should not be assumed that only European Americans need to develop this awareness. Cross-cultural understanding is essential all around. Individuals in any segment of society can be ill-informed, or well-informed, about any other group. For teacher educators and preservice teachers alike, new awareness can have an impact on the literature they choose and the ways they share it with young children.

Armed with this awareness, they can say, "I can't see all the pitfalls yet, but I am awake to the possibilities of using this literature in early childhood settings. I don't always know what to look and listen for now, but I will find out. Now I know where to look, and I know how to look closely. Then I will make choices based on what I see and hear, for the good of all the children whose lives I touch."

Note

[1] A revised version of this paper is available in the fall 2001 issue of *Early Childhood Research & Practice (ECRP)*, available at http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v3n2/mendoza.html.

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Appendix

Recommended Children's Books

A Gift from Papa Diego by Benjamin Alire Saenz. Illustrated by Geronimo Garcia. Cinco Puntos Press, 1998.

The Good Luck Cat by Joy Harjo. Illustrated by Paul Lee. Harcourt Brace, 2000.

Jingle Dancer by Cynthia Smith. Illustrated by Cornelius Van Wright and Ying-Hwa Hu. Morrow Junior Books, 2000.

Problematic Children's Books

A Day's Work by Eve Bunting. Illustrated by Ronald Himler. Clarion Books, 1994.

Arrow to the Sun by Gerald McDermott. Viking Press, 1978.

Brother Eagle, Sister Sky by Susan Jeffers. Dial, 1991.

Knots on a Counting Rope by Bill Martin, Jr., & J. Archambault. Illustrated by Ted Rand. Holt, 1987.

Prod and Pry from Inside Out: Ethnography of an Anti-Bias Support-Supervision Group for Teachers of Young Children

Tamar Jacobson

Abstract

The National Association for the Education of Young Children endorses an anti-bias curriculum for early childhood programs, in which early childhood educators are encouraged to enhance children's development of tolerance for cultural, gender, and ability diversity. Three administrators and seven early childhood teachers from four child care centers participated in a support-supervision group while implementing an anti-bias curriculum in their programs. This paper is an ethnography of the culture and processes of the group. Effects on members of group participation were analyzed based on questionnaires, journals of all participants and the facilitator, audiotaped group sessions, participant observation of the facilitator and an outside observer, and open-ended, in-depth interviews conducted by a third person. Data were categorized into three major themes: definitions of bias, group outcomes, and the facilitator's role. Subcategories were identified, including connections participants made between personal lives and professional behavior, awareness, and trust and discomfort. Primary attention in this paper is devoted to one of these subcategories—connections that participants made between personal lives and professional behavior.

Children form biased and prejudiced views as early as 2 years old, according to the Anti-Bias Curriculum Task Force (Derman-Sparks, 1990). Most white children, by the age of 4, have developed strong in-group preferences and negative attitudes toward other racial groups (Banks, 1993). By implementing well-developed curriculum interventions, educators can help young children develop more positive racial behaviors and attitudes. According to Banks, teachers are the "key variable" in implementing diversity education. "Teachers are human beings who bring their cultural perspectives, values, hopes, and dreams to the classroom. The teacher's values and behaviors strongly influence the views, conceptions, and behaviors of young children" (p. 248).

Teachers (of all colors) make assumptions about minority children's actions, words, intellects, families, and communities that are often inadequate (Delpit, 1995). These assumptions are a result of living within a society that maintains and nurtures stereotypes. Teachers have a responsibility to develop self-awareness in order to model nonbiased behaviors for children (Bowman, 1989).

Early childhood teachers read books about multicultural education (Byrnes & Kiger, 1992; Gonzalez-Mena, 1993; Kendall, 1983; McCracken, 1993; Neugebauer, 1992; Ramsey, 1987; Vold, 1992; York, 1991; Gordon & Browne, 1996), display recommended materials, or play multicultural music in their classrooms. However, not much is being done to support them in becoming aware of their own attitudes towards bias. Most books about implementation of multicultural education explain that teachers should analyze their attitudes, beliefs, and values, and focus on behaviors such as acceptance, openness in understanding the value of diversity, or advocating for tolerance. None of them, however, suggests how teachers might develop these skills.

Unless we facilitate a time for teachers to reflect on themselves and assist them in developing awareness of past experiences, it is highly unlikely that teachers will be nonbiased as they interact with children and families (Bowman & Stott, 1994). There is evidence that reflective practice enhances change in classroom practice. The National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development expects professionals to engage in reflective practice (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1994). Teachers are encouraged to cultivate certain specific attitudes towards reflective thinking such as open-mindedness, whole heartedness, and responsibility for facing the consequences (Dewey, 1933). Much of the research about reflective practice looks at teachers' ability to assess a situation and make sense out of the experience.

"Teachers who reflect on how they feel and why they feel the way they do are in a better position to understand their interactions with others" (Bowman, 1989, p. 445). The idea of self-awareness is discussed as assisting teachers in their classroom practices and personal lives and is characterized as "valuable, perhaps indispensable" (Ayers, 1989, p. ix). Ayers suggests that if teachers become more self-conscious, they could then become "more intentional, more able to endorse or reject aspects of their own teaching that they found hopeful or contrary, more able to author their own teaching scripts" (p. 140). Ayers shares his autobiography and self-reflection, which he believes is crucial for teaching (Ayers, 1993). He suggests that teachers should be asking: "Who are you? How did you come to take on your views and outlooks? What forces helped to shape you? … self-knowledge is most important (and least attended to)" (p. 129).

Teachers have control over the decisions they make, and without their active involvement, autonomy, and reflection, it seems difficult to make changes in classroom practice. In a case study where a teacher's beliefs about how children learn to read are strongly tied to his view of himself as a reader and how he learned to read, Richardson (1990) wonders if we are able to effect change in teacher education "other than through a type of individualistic, psychoanalytic approach" (p. 13). Having outlined some problems of teacher education, Brown discusses the use of a new metaphor—"therapy"—that would not only "enable us to understand what we do in fact believe, but to help us find out what is behind those beliefs. What are the images, fears, joys, associations we hold onto that generate such beliefs?" (Brown, 1982, p. 12).

Some teachers form support groups for reflective practice, as in the whole language movement (Paley, 1986; Rich, 1991; Salzer, 1991; Trueba, 1989). While a few of these groups are affiliated with school systems, mostly they are supported by the teachers themselves. However, there does not seem to be evidence of a support system for teachers to discuss emotional discomfort that is generated by prejudice. In the early childhood profession, in particular, there is little evidence of institutional emphasis on teacher reflection of any kind (Bowman, 1989). Wood, Cobb, and Yackel (1991) noted that teachers who are going to make drastic changes in their way of teaching would need support. Although, traditionally, support groups were formed because of medical or social problems, others exist for those going through a major transition in their lives, a definition that would include teachers desiring to make substantial changes in their professional practice (Salzer, 1991).

Teacher support groups have been effective in creating educational change. Not only have teachers been able to share successes and failures with their peers, they have also found "wisdom, a sense of justice, and a deep understanding of children, particularly of those who are neglected by prejudicial educational policies and practices" (Trueba, 1989, p. 150). No matter how much emphasis is placed on such other qualities in teaching as educational technique, technology, equipment, or buildings, the humanity of the teacher is the vital ingredient if children are to learn (Greenberg, 1969).

In 1955, Jersild conducted a five-year study where he surveyed about a thousand people, some of whom had experienced psychotherapy and had been seeking to discover what the idea of self-understanding might mean in their work as teachers (Jersild, 1955). Many expressed a desire for help such as might be gotten from group therapy. In an earlier article, Jersild suggests that in a group setting a person is able to learn to face herself by the interactions and responses of the other participants towards herself (Jersild, 1954). Jersild strongly urges the education community to add this type of support group to teacher preparation and to ongoing staff development.

One feminist researcher advocates developing groups for social change. "Revolutionary groups" should be "free, diverse, no bigger than the extended family—and everywhere" (Steinem, 1992, p. 348). Derman-

Sparks and members of the Anti-Bias Curriculum Task Force suggest forming "Anti-Bias Support/ Training Groups" (Derman-Sparks, Hohensee, Jimenez, Walker, & Watanabe, 1992).

Methodology

The author studied a support-supervision group for teachers of young children from various child care centers in Buffalo, New York. The term "support-supervision" was used to emphasize a counseling model of supervision for teachers. Ten early childhood educators from four child care centers voluntarily participated in a support group for a period of 20 weeks at bi-weekly sessions each lasting 2 hours. They had answered a letter, which was sent to 35 child care centers, inviting teachers to join a group for support implementing an anti-bias curriculum.

An important component of the study was an investigation of the connections that teachers made between personal feelings and their own behaviors in the classroom. The emergent nature of research required a "naturalist paradigm" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and used in-depth interviews and participant observations in order to obtain descriptive and qualitative data. The first broad question for the study was: what are the experiences of early educators in an anti-bias support-supervision group? As the group began to take shape, the role of the facilitator became a second issue. During data analysis, themes emerged, one of which was the connections between personal prejudice and professional behavior. Creating and facilitating the support group required a high level of participant observation.

Collection of Data

Participation was outlined to the group members as including attendance, journal writing, reading *Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children* (Derman-Sparks, 1990), taping group sessions, observation by a person other than the facilitator, in-depth interviews, and questionnaires at the beginning and end of the 20-week period. Each person was given Derman-Sparks's book as a gift for participation.

A second person, uninvolved with the support group sessions, conducted 1-1/2-hour in-depth interviews with each participant, at the conclusion of the 20-week period of support group sessions. I taped and transcribed interviews. Questions were based on two previous pilot studies of similar support groups (which I conducted two years prior to this study), analysis of participants' journals, and field notes. At times, personal experiences required further probing or additional questions relating to each individual specifically.

Subjectivity

Subjectivity, in a qualitative study, is brought into the process of inquiry. An ethnographer is encouraged to confront her biases and bring them into personal consciousness (Ayers, 1989; Peshkin, 1988). Peshkin suggests that researchers should "seek out their subjectivity" not only during analysis of data but "while their research is actively in progress" (p. 17). Researchers should become aware of how their inquiry and outcomes are shaped by their subjectivity and "disclose to their readers where self and subject became joined" (p. 17).

While positivists might regard bias as a problem, it can be seen as a strength of ethnographic inquiry with "empathic regard" as key to good data collection (Ayers, 1989). A sense of compassion and involvement is necessary, in fact essential, to a study where the subjects are also the source about how people feel and face their teaching lives (p. 20). Roman and Apple (1990) also challenge attempts to avoid subjectivity and talk about educational research as being an ethical and political act.

Data Analysis

Interpretation of data began as soon as the support group sessions started. I attended sessions with a professional counselor who supervised my interpretations of the support group every two weeks. Transcripts of interviews, participant journals, and written exercises were read several times, and codes were established by highlighting expressions, terms, ideas, or descriptions that occurred repeatedly in similar contexts. Establishing codes helped to determine and categorize themes that emerged from the stated experience of the participants. The most dominant themes that emerged from reading and coding transcripts of interviews and journals were matched with classes of data from the process of the support group sessions.

Validity

From the beginning, participants were invited to speak out whenever they felt discomfort and were able to leave of their own free will at any time. One of the central issues of this study was, in fact, the cooperation of the participants. Through my familiarity with the group in the role of its facilitator, I was able to gain a rapport that might not have been possible had I been a stranger, and a trust was developed with participants, which is important to a study of this nature.

One form of triangulation was by participant observation of a second observer, who wrote comprehensive field notes of two of the group sessions. As a second form of triangulation, a third person conducted interviews at the end of the 20-week period. A third form of triangulation was "participant checking": Two years after the support group had ended, the participants were given a draft of the dissertation and invited to a reunion meeting to discuss what they had read.

Prod and Pry from Inside Out

Group members were asked to choose pseudonyms in order to ensure confidentiality, as they had agreed to be quoted in the written section of the research project. All names of the participants are pseudonyms.

I became intimately involved with the way the participants were feeling about their personal and professional lives, and often shared my personal background. For a period of four months, I was able, many times, to challenge them and myself. It seemed as if perceptions about themselves and society were broadened, and awareness about bias and our work became, as Chloe described it, "big." As my own biases surely have affected interpretation of data and facilitation of the support group, I feel it is necessary to share with the reader my beliefs about bias as a survival skill. These beliefs were not shared with the group in a conscious way. However, they guided me through making choices about what questions to ask or at which times to probe further with a participant who was experiencing difficulty.

Adults develop theories about life from birth, based on a number of variables: personal life experience, interactions with society, and formal acquisition of knowledge. As professionals, adults learn to balance personal feelings with skills-oriented knowledge acquired. However, in order for situations or interactions to be acceptable, they have to make sense. Sense making is often dependent on survival skills or the way a person has learned to perceive her environment. Young children develop skills to survive emotional experiences that cause discomfort and pain or fear of the unknown.

For example, Hattie (one of the group members) chose to live without a man to raise her daughter. This decision could be interpreted as a survival skill developed from her personal and emotional experience. She learned, at a very young age, that "men always leave" and she will always be abandoned. She chose not to stay with a man so that she would not have to experience the abandonment that she felt sure would occur.

While these skills might have worked for a child, helpless and dependent, they become unnecessary and, at times, an obstacle for functional living in later years. Adults try to acquire different skills when they want to make changes in attitudes and behaviors. This process is often uncomfortable and, sometimes, painful because it becomes frightening to give up survival skills. After all, they helped a person survive:

> After abuse and trauma, it is really difficult to "let down one's guard." It is the hardest piece about survival to let go of. It is at the heart, the core, and the source of bias or prejudice and peace: within and without. (my journal, after one of the group sessions)

There is place for knowledge in rethinking or challenging learned survival skills. In addition, there is place for self-reflection about one's own life experiences and emotions. A balance between the cognitive and emotional, I believe, enhances awareness of bias and development of tolerance. In *The Color of Fear*, a movie about pro-diversity shown to high schools, one actor explained this idea to another: "Your survival affects how you hear me."

Self-reflection began for me as a preschool teacher in the early seventies. I read *Between Parent and Child* by Ginott (1961). The revelation for me, as I read that book, was the realization that adult interactions with me, when I was a child, affected me deeply. From then on, as I worked with children, I made connections between my life experience, survival skills, and professional behavior. In a sense, I "support-supervised" myself. Professionally, it was lonely. I thought about forming a group of teachers for support in processing many of the emotions, fears, and discomfort areas that arise while working with young children and their families. Therefore, this study became important for me, in a personal way.

As the idea grew, I had no doubt that I would facilitate such a group. One of the participants, Gloria, had called it a group working from "the inside out." It was important for me to experience the effects of such a group, as the facilitator, and not as a participant. Thus, I became researcher. I wanted to check it out, or as Lilian Katz would say, "prod and pry" (Katz, 1996). According to my life experience, confronting bias and attitudes of prejudice is an ongoing process—uncomfortable, painful, and unresolved.

Many times I challenged the participants to make connections between personal bias and interactions with children in their classrooms or staff at their centers. At times, I felt I succeeded. It was difficult at first, when I did not. I learned, time and time again, that my survival affected how I was able to hear the participants.

Connections between Personal and Professional

> "I AM HERE FOR CHILDREN AS WELL AS MYSELF!!" (Chloe, journal)

> Bias would be a whole bunch of stuff ... It could be sexual orientation. It could be ... like a person with a physical handicap who's in a wheelchair. You know, it's just the way you speak about someone I guess ... or even body language towards someone ... facial expressions, tone of voice, you know, talking down to someone ... I don't even know if I could define [it] because it's so wide. It's everything around us—from gender and race to families and relationships, how we look at other people. (Chloe, interview)

The purpose of the support-supervision group was not to be an inservice training model for teachers, which would give them technical assistance for developing a new curriculum. Indeed, the name "supervision" was specifically used as a model from counseling supervision. Participants were encouraged to examine how they had acquired bias in terms of their personal feelings and beliefs:

> I just finished calling the group to confirm plans for our Seder. I don't know if I can effectively comment on how excited I am about all of this, but of course I'll give it a stab. Everyone sounds genuinely interested in participating. Some, like Molly, are really looking forward to coming. Even as an adult, I am finding myself to be so pleased that others are interested and curious about my Judaism. Can you imagine how children must feel? This has great implications for our work. Children, like adults, need to feel that we are genuinely interested in the specific aspects of their lives that they feel is important. (Simcha, journal)

> Simcha surprised me the most. I feel she had a tremendous amount of courage to tell everyone, many of them strangers, that she is gay. I didn't know that about her ... [she] reminds me of my sister ... who is also gay. My sister and I are identical twins—isn't it interesting that we have the same genetic makeup and were raised in the same environment, yet she is gay and I am not? (Danielle, journal)

I worked at guiding the participants to focus on understanding how their personal feelings and beliefs, which had developed throughout their life, might be connected to working with children or other adults:

> I told the people who missed the last meeting that I was a lesbian. That discussion led into one about Gloria's students. It was a quite thorough discussion around issues of gender and sexuality

> (in a broad sense). This discussion seemed to be exactly what this group is about. We talked about our personal feelings about it but also talked about the practical (which is what I like to do!)—solutions about talking to parents, helping individual children as well as groups of children deal with differences—helping the individual accept and be themself and teach others to treat each other with respect. (Katherine, journal)

Making these connections required exploring relationships with their family of origin and entering painful, emotional territory at times, as they remembered difficult situations in their childhood and personal lives. For example, when the group was asked to consider how they felt about separation, as it became time to anticipate the end of the group meetings, Hattie wrote about feelings of separation in her journal:

> ... But back to me, how was all this talk of separation? How do I handle separation? Think, feel, how does it feel? All the way back through so many endings of men in my life. Ah, scream, wail, pound the walls, the ground, "no, no this cannot be happening, come back, come back, don't leave!" Countless times pleading, crawling on the ground, on my knees, "DON'T LEAVE ME!!!" Arms reaching, running, chasing, NO!"
>
> I see my mother crying after my father, the very words that I uttered after those men. In my memories of my painful beginnings, I feel my pain. As I look back on it as an adult, and as a parent, it has changed form again. As a child, I was so frightened. Would he really go this time, never to return?
>
> I wonder, do we ever stop reacting the same way? Do I always go after the one who, thank goodness, has finally left? I'm afraid to even attempt another matching up. Am I always to be attracted to men who continue to hurt with their love, who are passively aggressive, who play with me and I with them? Am I forever angry and half empty. I want to know if I really can change that. Is it instead like some genetic coding that cannot be erased? Are children able to change their world view? Can teachers and caregivers find the keys to turn their behaviors that are self-defeating into healthier ones? (Hattie, journal)

There was much evidence that participants were making connections between personal issues and their work. At times, connections were made in terms of understanding situations in their childhood that affected how they viewed interactions with children in their care. At other times, connections were made with what transpired in the group as affecting changes in participants' behavior with children or adults. These types of connections were more subtle and dealt with modeling behaviors of other group members or myself:

> It's a place to talk about the private stuff of your life or of your work. And it always does seem to tie back into your private life. If you started at private life, it ties back into work. If you start at work, it ties back into private life. They're just interconnected ... it just evolves, and that's what excites. (Hattie, interview).
>
> ... we discuss things. People's biases and how our own bias can be portrayed onto the children ... we talked about personal things amongst the group members ... Just talking about how our biases affect ourselves and how it affects the children we deal with every day. And then how, if they come from different backgrounds ... how that would affect us in dealing with them. (Chloe, interview)
>
> Work-wise I think it gave me or helped me be a little stronger in speaking up to certain issues that I would see ... so I think it's helped me push myself to talk to people ... and be a little more, I don't want to say assertive, but maybe stronger in dealing with things that bother me with other people ... I think I made a big jump. (Katherine, interview)

Four of the participants described the process of "self-examination" as uncomfortable and painful. Trust and discomfort became connected, because, on the one hand, as four of the women expressed difficulty working through situations and reflecting on their discomfort, others, on the other, described it as necessary to feel trusting and safe in order to self-reflect or make changes. The experience of discomfort was linked to self-awareness or desiring to make changes:

> This group is uncomfortable for me because it makes me think about things I'd rather not think about. (Danielle, journal)

Katherine described that trust was important for respect and honesty even as participants shared angry moments. She made connections between trust and tolerance:

> Actually, I think one of the most helpful things was it helped me build trust in other people. Because we talked about some very personal and painful things. And we were able to be honest with each other and sometimes disagree and there was even anger expressed. But at the end, everyone still respected and treated each other with respect ... I think it is helpful in anti-bias. It is not directly related but I think getting through any bias the trust issue is what's important. (Katherine, interview)

Discussion

Participants made connections between perceptions of bias and their interactions with children or staff:

> ... that was such a perfect example of the meat of all of this ... the connection ... that personal [connection] with the bias issues ... with the children. That was so perfect. (Katherine, reunion session)

Generally, teachers are not given assistance in identifying the source of their prejudice. Some of their behaviors are unconscious and affected by bias. All participants made some connections between how their own prejudices affected their behaviors with children, families, colleagues, or board members. Evidence of this conclusion was supported by data from all participants. For half of the participants, it was surprising for them to discover, in fact, how biased they were:

> ... the most overwhelming thing was how very biased we are about everything ... just the awareness level is so heightened because of the meetings. (Lydia, interview)

Two of the participants expressed that some of their behaviors, interactions, and perceptions of the angry children in their classrooms had been as a result of unconscious emotional issues within themselves. Heightened consciousness is an important step in the process of self-reflection towards making changes for oneself or the educational system. However, it requires taking risks and, for many, that feels uncomfortable or unsafe when experienced alone. One teacher educator suggests being a "resistance fighter on behalf of children" (Ayers, 1993, p. 131). That is a tough order for teachers unless they are given support and a safe environment in which to explore the risks of "self-criticism" that he recommends.

Simcha described the group as being different from regular staff meetings. She attributed that difference to the emotional nature of the group:

> ... not that it was unprofessional, but we crossed a line that would not necessarily happen in a staff meeting. The emotions ... people were very free to speak, very free to support or criticize, which happened over time as well as we became more comfortable with each other. Um, it was much more emotionally based ... You typically would not have, or hopefully would not have, staff members crying in a staff meeting. And it was not unusual for someone to become emotional to the point of tears in our group. (Simcha, interview)

Simcha raised an important consideration when she used the expression, "crossed a line." Does the concept of self-reflection relate only to cognitive and social awareness? Should teacher education and therapy be linked in some ways? Katherine asked two years after the support group, "Is it [self-reflection about bias] even a responsibility?"

There is no expectation of teachers of young children to explore or understand their own emotions. It is definitely not required and sometimes not even mentioned or discussed. And yet teachers are forced to deal with uncomfortable, emotional issues all day, sometimes moment by moment. Although therapy-type issues arose, the group attempted no therapy *per se*. It did, however, raise important concerns for creating a safe environment for participants in future groups of this nature.

Limitations

Although an invitation letter was sent to over 30 child care centers throughout western New York, participants were all Caucasian women. The group was able to deal with issues of age, gender, religion, and sexual orientation. However, culture was dealt with theoretically. Male gender issues were mentioned in passing and dealt with theoretically.

Length of time seemed to be a limitation for the group members. Similar groups might continue for a longer period of time, depending on the needs of participants. Had the group been together a few months longer, different issues might have been presented or evidence been stronger on certain themes.

A person other than myself interviewed participants so that they would feel free to describe what they had felt about the group experience without pressure to please me. Possibly some of their replies were consciously or unconsciously aimed at helping me out. More than half the participants described themselves as people who like to help, have difficulty in refusing, and who like to please others.

Conclusion

It is difficult to enter the domain of tolerance for diversity without challenging fundamental perceptions and attitudes of participants. I observed and challenged subjects to expand their perceptions of bias, and I was, myself, challenged at the same time.

Teachers treat children as they are treated (Katz, 1993). In that case, if we want teachers to treat children fairly, listen to, accept, and understand them, thereby enhancing children's self-identity, supervisors and educators must do the same for teachers. Some form of support for in-depth self-reflection about bias and emotional awareness is necessary for a fundamental change of tolerance for diversity.

There can be no doubt that an anti-bias curriculum is essential in developing tolerance for diversity and fair treatment for all. Resolving issues of bias is an ongoing process, and teachers would benefit from support in this type of self-reflection. We pay a high price when we neglect this area of staff development. If we are concerned about making a fundamental change in pro-diversity education of all young children, how do we support teachers with a fundamental change in themselves? "What should we be doing? The answers, I believe, lie not in a proliferation of new reform programs but in some basic understandings of who we are and how we are connected and disconnected from one another" (Delpit, 1995, p. xv).

> I'm noticing more and more with the children how much the media affects gender decisions ... girl toys vs boy toys ... I feel I have not conquered my biases but have opened up my eyes to all that exists in the world. I can confront and deal with them better than before but have not really worked anything out. (Chloe, journal)

This study did not solve the problems of bias nor give all the answers to the concept of self-reflection. However, it did broaden perspectives and support teachers of young children in making some changes in personal and professional lives by challenging them to face bias and their inner selves.

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First- and Second-Language Acquisition in Early Childhood

Beverly A. Clark

Abstract

Noting the importance of language acquisition for children's physical, social, and cognitive development, this paper discusses first- and second-language acquisition in children. After providing background on second-language acquisition, the paper discusses the controversy surrounding bilingual education programs. The paper then explores what is known about language learning, noting that in both first- and second-language acquisition, a stimulating and rich linguistic environment will support language development. The paper concludes with a discussion of factors that contribute to students' academic success, including using students' first language to provide academic instruction for as long as possible and using an active discovery approach to teaching and learning.

> Language is inextricably entwined with our mental life—
> our perceiving, our remembering, our attending, our
> comprehending, our thinking—in short, all of our attempts
> to make sense of our experience in the world....
> (Lindfors, 1991, p. 8)

Although there are many differences in parent-child interaction patterns around the world, virtually all normally developing children become language users at the same rate. The way children learn language follows a specific pattern and is inherently systemic in nature. It is clear that children must be exposed to language and be able to interact with others, but how that exposure and interaction occur is extremely variable. Even though young children are not formally taught language, language acquisition is part of the overall development of children physically, socially, and cognitively. There is strong evidence that children may never acquire a language if they have not been exposed to a language before they reach the age of 6 or 7. Children between the ages of 2 and 6 acquire language so rapidly that by 6 they are competent language users. By the time children are of school-age, they have an amazing language ability; it is a seemingly effortless acquisition (Cole & Cole, 1993; Curtiss, 1977; Goldin-Meadow, 1982; Lindfors, 1991; McLaughlin, 1984; Newport, 1991).

There remains a great deal that we do not know about language development in children. A child's language is constantly developing and changing. Children are actively engaging in communication as they are learning to communicate. The child is the active party in the language-learning process and in the process of making sense of language. His experience and interaction with others give him the background to relate language to the sound/meaning relationship and to the purpose it represents. Children naturally obtain a "communicative competence," intrinsically understand the rules of grammar, and gain knowledge of the rules of using language. Linguistic structure comes through the child's own cognitive and social activity. Although there is great variation between individual children and the rate of their language acquisition, there is little variation in the pattern of development between languages. One language is not more difficult than another, as we can establish by observing the ease with which children acquire different languages by the same age. Virtually every child develops linguistic and communicative competence, and it is learned naturally and in context, not arranged in an easy-to-difficult sequence. The fact that both children and adults constantly communicate with a high degree of success is evidence that we are all following the same rules for appropriate communication behavior (Lindfors, 1991; McLaughlin, 1984). Patton Tabors asks educators to think of language as a "puzzle" with all of the pieces needing to come together for language to really work. These pieces of the puzzle are phonology, vocabulary, grammar, discourse, and pragmatics (Tabors, 1997).

Language is also an important way for us to make sense out of our past experience, to learn from it, and to make it comprehensible. In the beginning, children's language growth comes from their direct experience. It is personal and related to the present. As their language understanding grows, children can relate to ever more expanding situations. This early language experience is necessary to be able to use language symbols apart from actual situations. Children use language metaphorically, providing evidence that for children language is creative as well as imitative. For children, language is a powerful tool for understanding the world around them. By questioning, children become active in their attempt to comprehend and learn (Lindfors, 1991; Winner, McCarthy, Kleinman, & Gardner, 1979).

Children are constantly modifying their speech depending on their audience. An example of this behavior is when children modify their speech when talking to younger children. As children develop their ability to use language, they become more and more understanding of social situations and learn how to control their own actions and thoughts. By listening to children's self-corrections, questions, and language play, we realize the extent of their knowledge of language structure. Those things that children can articulate give us an understanding of what they can comprehend. Their active, creative invention of language is amazing and unique to each child. Language development is a gradual process and reflects a child's cognitive capacities. Language is purposeful. As children play and work, they do so through language (Garcia, 1994; Lindfors, 1991; McLaughlin, 1984; Shatz & Gelman, 1973).

Children expand their development of language by relating what they already know to what they encounter. "It is only with one foot placed squarely, securely within the known, the familiar, that the child can place the other foot in the beyond" (Lindfors, 1991, p. 282). Play is a way for children to extend their language abilities; it is where new vocabulary can be introduced as well as new ways to use it. It also allows children opportunities to express their point of view, solve disagreements, and persuade peers to work together. Language play has a focus on the very language elements that children will need to consider later when they learn about language. Language is a major means of influencing thinking and behavior—that of another person or one's own. For language to expand, children need to be given many opportunities to interact. Children learn from speaking. Children need to feel socially competent and accepted to become competent language users. Language is the way children are socialized by adults and the way children learn to guide their inner voice. The central role of language is the way we communicate with other people and with ourselves (Berk & Winsler, 1995; California Department of Education, 1988; Lindfors, 1991; Tabors, 1997).

In the average child, at whatever developmental stage we observe, language is alive and well. Children's language development is a creative process that only needs a rich environment to thrive (Lindfors, 1991).

"Because Vygotsky regarded language as a critical bridge between the sociocultural world and individual mental functioning, he viewed the acquisition of language as the most significant milestone in children's cognitive development" (Berk & Winsler, 1995, p. 12). Put another way, language is the verbal way we express our understanding of the world (Piaget, 1926, 1983).

Background on Second-Language Acquisition

Most children in the world learn to speak two languages. Bilingualism is present in just about every country around the world, in all classes of society, and in all age groups (Grosjean, 1982; McLaughlin, 1984). "In the United States monolingualism traditionally has been the norm. Bilingualism was regarded as a social stigma and liability" (McLaughlin, 1984, p. 3). Language represents culture, and the bilingual person is often a member of a minority group whose way of thinking and whose values are unfamiliar to the "majority." Language is something we can identify and try to eradicate without showing our distrust and fear of others (McLaughlin, 1984).

Even strong supporters of bilingual education such as Cummins (1981, 1996) do not claim that bilingual education is the most important element in a child's education. In Cummins' view, it is more about good programs and about the status of the language group in their community that will determine success (Cummins, 1981, 1996).

There are no negative effects for children who are bilingual. Their language development follows the same pattern as that of monolingual children (Goodz, 1994). "Children who develop proficiency in using their native language to communicate, to gain information, to solve problems, and to think can easily learn to use a second language in similar ways" (Pérez & Torres-Guzmán, 1996, p. 96). Even young children who are learning a second language bring all of the knowledge about language learning they have acquired through developing their first language. "For these children, then, second-language acquisition is not a process of discovering what language *is*, but rather of discovering what *this* language is" (Tabors, 1997, p. 12).

There is, however, much more variation in how well and how quickly individuals acquire a second language. There is no evidence that there are any biological limits to second-language learning or that children necessarily have an advantage over adults. Even those who begin to learn a second language in childhood may always have difficulty with pronunciation, rules of grammar, and vocabulary, and they may never completely master the forms or uses of the language. There is no simple way to explain why some people are successful at second-language learning and some are not. Social and educational variables, experiential factors, and individual differences in attitude, personality, age, and motivation all affect language learning (Bialystok & Hakuta, 1994; McLaughlin, 1984; Wong Fillmore, 1991a; Tabors, 1997).

McLaughlin notes that "ultimate retention of two languages depends on a large number of factors, such as the prestige of the languages, cultural pressures, motivation, opportunities of use—but not on age of acquisition" (McLaughlin, 1984, p. 73). It should not be surprising that bilingual children often have one area of language learning that is not equal between the two languages. It does not happen very often that both languages will be equally balanced. The society that children find themselves in and how important each language is viewed within that society are very important. Children will only continue to use two languages if doing so is perceived to be valuable. As children go through school, they usually lose much of their ability in their native language. Children bring their attitudes toward a second language and those who speak it as well as their attitude toward their first language. These attitudes are important to the success of the child learning a second language and retaining his or her language (Collier, 1995b; Lindfors, 1991). Young children may appear to be better second-language users because the language they are learning is less cognitively complex to learn and they can learn to speak a second language quickly and often with a native-like pronunciation. But research has shown that adolescents and young adults are actually better at acquiring a second language (Collier, 1995b).

Children do seem to forget languages more quickly than adults, which can result in negative cognitive effects (for example, if they lose their first language and, thus, the ability to communicate with other family members who may continue to speak only the first language) (Cummins, 1976, 1977, 1979; McLaughlin, 1984; Wong Fillmore, 1991a). There is some thought that children who may appear to be learning a second language very quickly at a very young age (before the age of 5), accompanied by the loss of their first language, have really replaced the first language with the second language (Bialystok & Hakuta, 1994). Many researchers believe that there is little benefit and potential harm in introducing a second language at a very young age unless caregivers are careful to maintain both languages as equally important and valuable (McLaughlin, 1984).

Although languages and the way different cultures expose their children to language vary, the outcome of first-language acquisition is clear. Almost all children become fluent in their first language. This kind of guarantee is not automatic with the acquisition of a second language. Second-language acquisition is as complex as the acquisition of the first language but with a wide variety of variables added in. An interesting metaphor that Bialystok and Hakuta (1994) use is comparing the addition of a second language to home renovation vs. new construction. People have the ability to learn languages throughout their lifetime. How well they may be able to learn other languages (after the first) depends on many variables. The same strategies used for first-language acquisition are used for subsequent language learning (Bialystok & Hakuta, 1994; Collier, 1995a; Lindfors, 1991).

This individuality in regard to the acquisition of a second language is part of the controversy surrounding bilingual education. Should programs support true bilingualism, a transitional program that only supports the native language until children have learned enough English to be taught in an English-only environment, or should every effort from the very beginning be an immersion in English? "Confusion of goals—maintenance versus transition—has contributed much to the controversy swirling around bilingual education" (Hakuta, 1986, p. 193).

From the very beginning, Americans have wrestled with their feelings toward other cultures and languages. At risk is the definition of what it means to be an American. Many believe that bilingual programs do not encourage children to learn English but only give them an opportunity to use their native language. There is also a strong belief that young children acquire languages easily, even second languages, so if they are in English-only classrooms they will learn English (Hakuta, 1986).

Secretary of Education Richard Riley's goal of having every English-language learner proficient in English in three years represents the thinking of many politicians and educators. To their way of thinking, there is no reason why this goal cannot be accomplished, and English language learners have spent too much time in native-language instruction (Gersten, 1999).

What We Know about Language Learning

In both first- and second-language acquisition, a stimulating and rich linguistic environment will support language development. How often and how well parents communicate with their children is a strong predictor of how rapidly children expand their language learning. Encouraging children to express their needs, ideas, and feelings whether in one language or two enriches children linguisticly and cognitively. Engaging the children and encouraging them to express themselves interactively while building on their prior knowledge in real-life situations is an effective way to build language experience (Cuevas, 1996; McLaughlin, 1984).

Young children will become bilingual when there is a real need to communicate in two languages and will just as quickly revert back to monolingualism when there is no longer a need. If children's interactions outside the home are in only one language, they may quickly switch over to that language and may only have a receptive understanding of their first language. This process may occur even more rapidly when there is more than one child in the family. Children are not usually equally proficient in both languages. They may use one language with parents and another with their peers or at school. At the same time children are acquiring new vocabulary and understanding of the use of language, it may appear that they are falling behind in language acquisition; however, it is normal for there to be waves of language acquisition. Overall, continued first-language development is related to superior scholastic achievement. When children do not have many opportunities to use language and have not been provided with a rich experiential base, they may not learn to function well in their second language, and at the same time, they may not continue to develop their first language. This phenomenon occurs whether children are monolingual or bilingual with the result that their language level is not appropriate for their age. Language learning is not linear, and formal teaching does not speed up the learning process. Language learning is dynamic—language must be meaningful and used (Collier, 1995a; Grosjean, 1982; Krashen, 1996; McLaughlin, 1984).

Tabor states that "young children, then, certainly seem to understand that learning a second language is a cognitively challenging and time-consuming activity. Being exposed to a second language is obviously not enough; wanting to communicate with people who speak that language is crucial if acquisition is to occur. Children who are in a second-language learning situation have to be sufficiently motivated to start learning a new language" (Tabors, 1997, p. 81).

There is real concern that if children do not fully acquire their first language, they may have difficulty later in becoming fully literate and academically proficient in the second language (Collier, 1992, 1995a; Collier & Thomas, 1989; Cummins, 1981, 1991; Collier & Thomas, 1995). The interactive relationship between language and cognitive growth is important. Preserving and strengthening the home language supports the continuity of cognitive growth. Cognitive development will not be interrupted when children and parents use the language they know best. Experience and ideas must be familiar and meaningful to the child to be learned. Everything acquired in the first language (academic skills, literacy development, concept formation, subject knowledge, and learning strategies) will transfer to the second language. As children are learning the second language, they are drawing on the background and experience they have available to them from their first language. Collier believes that the skills children develop in their first language form the foundation they must have to be academically successful in their second language.

Children who are literate in their first language may experience cognitive difficulties as they acquire a second language. Literacy not only transfers across languages, it facilitates learning to read in another language even when the language and writing system appear to be very different. Reading in all languages is done in the same way and is acquired in the same way. The common linguistic universals in all languages mean that children who learn to read well in their first language will probably read well in their second language. Reading in the primary language is a powerful way of continuing to develop literacy in that language, and to do so, children must have access to a print-rich environment in the primary language (Bialystok & Hakuta, 1994; Collier, 1995a; Cummins, 1981; Krashen, 1996; McLaughlin, 1984; Pérez & Torres-Guzmán, 1996). "When we learn a new language, we're not just learning new vocabulary and grammar, we're also learning new ways of organizing concepts, new ways of thinking, and new ways of learning language. Knowing two languages is much more than simply knowing two ways of speaking" (Bialystok & Hakuta, 1994, p. 122).

When children learn all new information and skills in English, their first language becomes stagnant and does not keep pace with their new knowledge. This may lead to limited bilingualism, where children never become truly proficient in either their first or second language. Supporting only English also gives children the impression that different languages and cultures are not valued. On cognitive and academic measures, children who have lost their first language (so-called "subtractive" bilinguals) do not score as well as children who have maintained or expanded their first language as they acquire the second language (additive bilinguals) (Collier, 1992; Ramsey, 1987; Saville-Troike, 1982). When the first language continues to be supported (and this support is especially important when the first language is not the power language outside the home), introducing a second language between the ages of 5 and 11 will ensure full cognitive growth in the first language, which will support full cognitive growth in the second language (Collier, 1995b).

The learner's social skills and styles are also important to language learning. Children who are naturally social and communicative seek out opportunities to engage others. If these children are given lots of opportunity to interact positively with others who speak the target language, their language learning is promoted. Personality, social competence, motivation, attitudes, learning style, and social style in both learners and speakers influence the way a child learns the second language. With the variety of programs available to children, these elements become variables that are difficult to factor in and whose effect is difficult to predict (Lindfors, 1991; Wong Fillmore, 1991a; Wong Fillmore, 1991b).

Successful Programs

Collier and Thomas have been compiling data about language minority student achievement across five program models from a series of three- to six-year longitudinal studies from well-implemented programs in five school districts. They have found that, among the variables, these programs had three components in common that predicted academic success. Collier and Thomas found that these components were more important than either the specific program type or the student background variables. These three components were (1) using the student's first language to provide academic instruction for as long as possible, (2) using an active discovery approach to teaching and learning, and (3) treating the bilingual programs as "gifted" programs so that the relationship between minority and majority students changed to a positive environment for all. Within these components runs the key thread of making sure that instruction is always cognitively challenging and complex (Collier & Thomas, 1995).

Collier and Thomas have developed a conceptual model for acquiring a second language at school that has sociocultural, linguistic, academic, and cognitive processes as the main components. They feel that second-language acquisition needs to be looked at as the very complex interdependent learning it is. There is an enormous difference between the time it takes for a second-language learner to obtain oral fluency or social language and academic language. It may take only a short time for oral fluency, but it may take from seven to ten years to become academically fluent—while the English only student is progressing as well (Collier, 1995a). "Developing proficiency in academic language thus means catching up and keeping up with native speakers, for eventual successful academic performance at secondary and university levels of instruction—a monumental achievement" (Collier & Thomas, 1989).

In bilingual programs, students—whether they are language minority students or not—continue to build their cognitive and academic growth in their native language while they are acquiring the second language. Many studies have found that cognitive development and academic development in the first language have an extremely important and positive effect on second-language schooling (e.g., Bialystok & Hakuta, 1994; Collier & Thomas, 1989, 1995; Garcia, 1994).

The big difference in thinking about best programs for children is to trust that children bring so much to school and have so much to offer. They need opportunities and experiences to grow and to have more to relate their prior knowledge to. Programs need to be highly interactive and child centered rather than teacher centered. Children need to have the opportunity to solve problems and discover the world around them. Children who are in a child-centered environment where discovery learning is the instructional method will be prepared to know how to get access to new knowledge and how to apply, evaluate, and solve problems as new information becomes available. Active learning using constructivist and whole language approaches uses meaningful activities and children's prior knowledge, experiences, and perceptions to build real knowledge (Collier, 1995b; Cuevas, 1996).

Effective programs know that support for language learning and interaction is key to children's growth. Language is a good example of an area in which children come to preschool with a great deal to offer. Teachers need to learn to recognize how much language children have and how to encourage its use and growth through meaningful conversations. The way children perceive, remember, comprehend, and make sense of their world is all tied up in language. Preschool programs can provide many opportunities to interact with peers and new adults and encounter a variety of new ideas. Through the child's own talk and interactions with others, their own ideas take shape, and they have the opportunity to explore what other people are thinking and go beyond their own personal experience. "It is in children's use of exploratory language—the language of wondering, their inquiring, their conjecturing, their considering, their imagining—that we are occasionally able to glimpse through windows into our children's thought" (Lindfors, 1991, pp. 8, 9).

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Roundtable II

"I am like this because I just can't be different. . ." Personal and Professional Dimensions of Ana's Teaching: Some Implications for Teacher Education

Teresa Vasconcelos

Abstract

Teaching is a form of public service that may give personal fulfillment to those who are involved in it. It is important to highlight the personal dimensions of teaching along with the professional dimensions to help illustrate the teacher's role as a public servant. This paper discusses the practice of one Portuguese kindergarten teacher—Ana—observed throughout almost two years using ethnographic methodologies. Excerpts from field notes and interviews illustrate how Ana derived personal satisfaction from her teaching and how she perceived her teaching as a "moral act" and therefore a public service. Finally, the paper explores how Ana's "voice" can become a pedagogical tool for others.

To Lilian Katz

It is through others
That we develop into ourselves
(L. S. Vygotsky, 1930/1981)

...That the teaching act becomes
The resonance of all our being
(Sylvia Ashton-Warner, 1963)

All what I do is connected with the interpretative world.
Really, it is a very constructed world.
I am very interested, not in what we see,
But in what we think we see,
As we feel what we think we see, what it is....
It is small symbols, nothing of great,
But collectively they create the context, the real thing....
What I was doing was not related with sculpture
Or with an artistic strategy.
I was trying to understand what life was.
(Matt Mullican, sculptor, 1999)

Teaching is a form of public service that may bring personal fulfillment to those who are involved in this profession (Katz, 1995; 1984; Spodek, Saracho, & Peters, 1988). Yet such personal fulfillment, the development of a sense of doing a public service, is not accomplished without inner struggles, difficult choices, self-clarification, an enlarged sense of one's own profession. I suggest that a teacher is a caring citizen who works not only for her rights and dignity to be respected—out of respect for herself—but also to nurture within herself a deep sense of social responsibility, of care, of deep attention to the other. Pedagogy, according to Readings (1996), is as simple as a "network of obligation ... [in which] the condition of pedagogical practice is an infinite attention to the other" (p. 158).

There is limited research about what makes a good early childhood or elementary school teacher (Ayers, 1989; Yonemura, 1986; Clandinin, 1985). Most of the studies that look at good teachers simply develop lists of behaviors and skills and try to find the "expert teacher," as if it would be possible to clone the good ones. Teaching is far more complex. Yet, we may learn how to find an inner sense of our profession as a kind of caring citizenship from stories of master teachers and their descriptions of their own inner and professional paths. Life stories and biographies of teachers may help us to understand the teaching profession (Goodson, 1992a, 1992b; Carter, 1993).

This paper will attempt to describe how a Portuguese kindergarten[1] teacher has built a sense of her own profession as a caring citizen. Goodson (1992a) considers that "it is clear we still have an underdeveloped literature on the personal, biographical, and historical aspects of teaching" (p. 234). The teacher's "voice" (Goodson, 1992a, 1992b), the "voices" of people who know her, including the researcher's voice, will be interwoven, as we will attempt to give a picture of who Ana is, her own very inner perceptions of who she is, how she understands her profession and her role with children. A set of vignettes from the field notes and interviews (with Ana and with other people) will illustrate how Ana gets personal satisfaction from her teaching and how she perceives her teaching as a "moral act" (Tom, 1984) and, therefore, a public service (Hansen, 1995). Finally, we will explore how Ana's "voice" can become a "pedagogical tool" for others. Implications will be drawn for my present work as a teacher trainer, both in preservice teacher education and inservice and continuous teacher education.

The present work is drawn from a larger study (Vasconcelos, 1997a) about Ana's practice as a kindergarten teacher and her group of twenty 3- through 6-year-old children. The metaphor of a "large table" emerged from the study and was developed elsewhere (Vasconcelos & Walsh, in press), as a way of building community and a sense of citizenship with very young children. Using biographical (Smith, 1994) and ethnographic methods (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994), I, as researcher, "visited" Ana, the teacher, for almost two years of naturalistic observations, using "thick description" (Geertz, 1973)[2] and an interpretive interactionist approach (Denzin, 1989) to her life[3] and her work with the children, and by interviewing her and people around her (family, colleagues, mentors, etc.). "Epiphanies" were recollected that helped to elucidate Ana's personal and professional path (Denzin, 1989).[4] A social constructivist perspective (Vygotsky, 1986, 1978; Wertsch, 1989; Bruner, 1996, 1990, 1986; Bruffee, 1986)—the awareness that realities are socially constructed—and a feminist perspective on teaching (Carter, 1993; Whiterell & Noddings, 1991; Stanley & Wise, 1993; Walsh, Baturka, Colter, & Smith, 1991; Weiler, 1994) guided our analysis of Ana's practice. Therefore, researching Ana was an attempt to visit a teacher's life and work with the voice of that same teacher (Goodson, 1992a, 1992b; Ball & Goodson, 1985) and represented a deep challenge for myself as a researcher and as a teacher educator. This is the reason why Ana' s voice continues to haunt my work as a researcher (Vasconcelos, 1997a, 1997b, 1999, 2000a, 2000b, in press; Vasconcelos & Walsh, in press) and as a teacher educator (Vasconcelos, 2000b).

Voices of Ana and about Ana

> Day after day, I enter *Figueirinha* [the kindergarten] as if it were a refreshing oasis after the harsh heat of a desert. A sort of Shangri-La. Ana sits, as usual, around the Large Table with the children. Vasco arrives with his father: "There is our Vasco!" greets Ana. Vasco sits among his friends and informs "I have news to tell: My mother showed me crickets last night." "Crickets, crickets!" repeat the other children. "Yes, crickets," emphasizes Ana, the teacher: "When I was a child, I used to go in the evenings to listen to them and make them come out of their little hole in the ground." "I want to draw a cricket," decides Joana. "We need to look in the books, to see what they look like," insists Vasco. Ana writes what the children are saying on a large piece of paper. (field notes)

> When I was a child, I suffered because I think I didn't like myself enough. One of the things I treasure is that children feel accepted as they are … more specifically those children who have been emotionally or socially and economically deprived…. What I want a child to learn is that she can be herself and should leave the early childhood classroom [experience] with an inner strength. This inner strength is built day after day…. In kindergarten, all children should have an opportunity. (Ana, interview)

These excerpts provide the context of the study at a glance. Ana is a well-respected, experienced early childhood educator, who has been working as a cooperating teacher at my university. She has more than 30 years of experience with children. She participates regularly in the activities of a cooperative teachers' movement, the *Movimento da Escola Moderna* (MEM, Modern School Movement), created in Portugal by Sérgio Niza (Nóvoa, 1992; Nóvoa & Vilhena, 1996) under the inspiration of French pedagogue Célestin Freinet[5]:

> When I got to know the *Movimento da Escola Moderna*, I just thought that, as a person, I identified much more with the Movement than with the practice that I had learned at my teachers training college.... When I found the *Movimento*, I found an echo, people that spoke the same language as myself. I saw other colleagues working, and I identified with the *Movimento*. I started reading Freinet's materials.... I liked him because, as a classroom teacher, he would let free flying pigeons inside his classroom. (Ana, interview)

Goodson (1992a) considers that in order "to understand something so intense and personal as teaching, it is critical we know about the person the teacher is..." (p. 234). Ana explains her caring attitude and her love for nature from her childhood, raised on a farm in the northeast part of rural Portugal:

> As a child, I loved to help my grandmother feed the chicks: cutting the greens, mixing them with corn flour and boiling water; it was this way we would feed the chickens. I loved the little chicks; I even would bring them into my bed. (Ana, interview)

She recalls, from a very early age, her uneasiness when she saw those living well (like her family) side by side with the poor. With her first salary as a professional, she bought bed covers for the poor workers on her family farm located in the interior north of Portugal:

> How can we make sermons about the gospels and leave the farmers living in misery? The gospels call forth equality, dignity, and justice for all. (Ana, interview)

Ana became an early childhood educator because her sister told her that it could be an interesting profession for her. When she was attending a Catholic school, the nuns would put her in charge of the younger children:

> The Head of my teacher training college used to say that I could not have chosen a more appropriate profession, I was born for that.... I received from her a sense of my profession: in her very peculiar style, she emphasized the *moral value* of the unique human being; she treasured an education for citizenship. (Ana, interview)

Ana explains her love for her profession as being a deep part of her life:

> If I didn't treasure my profession so much—for example, when I traveled for a week in Morocco during vacation—I would not have brought those artifacts (objects, cards, materials...) and developed a project with the children. Some colleagues tell me: "How is that possible? Only you, Ana!" This means that I probably love my profession, don't you think? (Ana, interview)

Maria, Ana's daughter, in an interview, comments about her mother as a professional:

> On a professional level, I think it must be wonderful to be doing what one likes to do, to feel fulfilled in one's profession. My mother will soon be 51, and I can't simply imagine her retired, sitting on a couch in front of TV, doing nothing.... It must be really good when one does what she really likes to do. (Maria, Ana's daughter, interview)

Her connection with the *Movimento da Escola Moderna* was a very important epiphany (Denzin, 1989) in her professional career. The binding to a cooperative teachers' movement with tremendous emphasis on pedagogy *and* culture was of vital importance for her personal and professional development:

> I felt they were tuned with my way of being, my personality. I started that process of identification ... then we start applying those things without even remembering that we are applying what we have read, you know? I felt that the *Movimento* had a lot to do with me... The most important things were those meetings and the cultural events organized around them. The

> meetings happened alternately. As teachers, we would interact in the same classrooms where we used to work, experimenting with materials and visiting each other's classrooms, since we learn a lot by just seeing. We actually used the same methods we used with the children: to plan what we were going to do, to do it, to evaluate. So whatever we used with the kids, we first experimented with that among ourselves, as teachers. There were also moments when we shared with each other what we were doing with the children. At times, it was hard when others criticized our work; we were all learning how to do it. (Ana, interview)

But, she insists, "the leaders had a strong scientific basis, and they would share that knowledge with others, in small groups, so that we all could learn" (Ana, interview). MEM is a movement that affirms teachers' strengths, providing them with a sense of togetherness and of belonging, as they discuss their practice with their peers. They still meet every other Saturday, and Niza continues to be their leader (Nóvoa & Vilhena, 1996).

Ana synthesizes her connection with MEM this way:

> My passage through my teacher training college was a moral passage. My passage through *Movimento da Escola Moderna* was a conscious passage, a philosophical choice; it was there that I learned that politics is not separated from life. (Ana, interview)

After several other jobs, she accepted a position at a cooperative day care center where she learned to develop real teamwork. Then she applied to the public kindergarten of *Figueirinha* where she worked for 18 years until her retirement:

> I came to *Figueirinha* with that experience of doing real teamwork at the cooperative day care center. So somebody who brings that must necessarily bring intensity to a group. And it was also part of my way of being, this dynamism. We tried--we were four teachers--to create, since the beginning, real teamwork, and when we start doing that, we can't just give up. (Ana, interview)

> Work for me is like my second home.... You know, I feel so good, so good, after having arranged the space in the classroom; I like to have a pleasant place to work, you see? (deep emotion). Tears come to my eyes when I speak about this because it is the truth.... The work environment has to be pleasant so that I like living there. If I like being there, then I pass that feeling onto the children, don't I? For example: having soft music playing. For me, listening to classical music makes the environment restful. Once a colleague told me that all my classroom equipment and materials were old.... She didn't understand, you see? The children would dress the dolls with my daughter's old baby clothes, and I would use some of her old toys ... and the children would not destroy them ... they were Maria's toys when she was a baby.... I can't see those things as old-fashioned.... Do we really need to go to sophisticated shops and buy the latest fashion toys or educational materials? It is like when I was raising Maria. She didn't need lots of toys. Her preferred one was a child-sized car with wheels where she would sit on and roll around. Her father had built it.... (Ana, interview)

Despite being a caring, committed teacher, Ana cares also for herself as a person, while avoiding a totally selfish attitude that has proved to be destructive in the caring professions (Leavitt, 1994). Cristina, one of the mothers, a simple doorwoman, who was rather close to Ana, explains:

> What is extraordinary is that Ana is so deeply interested in what she does.... We can spot that she likes her profession, that she is in the right place. And my daughter loves her so much, she is being helped and stimulated by Ana.... I trust Ana's experience ... because she is also a mother. Therefore, she has been helping raise my child, and I try to follow her advice. (Cristina, interview)

One of the teacher aides describes her cooperation with Ana in the classroom:

> I feel fulfilled when I work with Ana. She trusts me, and she is fair. (Adelaide, classroom helper, interview)

Ana passes this sense of personal fulfillment to the people she works with because of the way she builds teamwork.

"Teaching as a Total Practice of Citizenship"

I attempted to give a glimpse—necessarily limited—of Ana as a woman and as a teacher. The role of her initial training, specifically, the fact of being part of a cooperative teachers' movement, helped her to become who she presently is. Yet, we may deduct from her descriptions that, from a very early age, she demonstrated love for teaching. It is hard, for Ana, to explain why she teaches the way she does. It is profoundly embedded within her Self:

> I am like this because I can't be different; it is very simple ... I've spent many years of my life thinking that I was good at nothing.... I may not have that encyclopedic culture, but I know that I have something to give to the children.... For me, to educate, it is an art, it is very gratifying for me, and it gives me immense pleasure. I like to watch as children come first into my hands and the way they are now; each one has evolved in different ways.... (Ana, interview)

> In order to live happy, fulfilled, we need joy.... In order to have joy, I have to have things that I like to do, to like what I do everyday. To enjoy the beautiful things that life has to show us.... My being has to be fed on a daily basis with good things, you see? I have this need to think that what happens is not the end.... I like to see people happy. (Ana, interview)

Sérgio Niza, the *Movimento* leader, may have an explanation, a vision of why Ana is who she is, what has deeply structured her teaching:

> The *Movimento* is a space of experimentation and of ongoing meetings, where training happens by multiple sharing among school levels and different disciplinary areas.... Therefore, the professional practice becomes *a total practice of citizenship*; somebody who exercises that practice has in itself a structuring dimension. (Niza, interview)

> When Ana says that she can't separate her professional "I" from her personal "I"... that is the *ethical sense of one's profession*.... It must be what people call vocation ... it is, finally, the personal process of one's identification with her own profession. (Niza, interview)

Several authors describe the identity crisis of teachers as the "object of non-ending debates during the last 20 years ... caused by rational models of teaching which imposed a separation between the personal 'I' and the professional 'I'. The transposition of this attitude from the scientific level into the institutional level has contributed to intensify the control over teachers, underlying their process of underprofessionalization" (Nóvoa, 1992, p. 3).

Walsh comments on Ana's teaching:

> Teaching is an art. However many skills go into it, as do so many skills go into an artist's efforts, the decisions that must be made about when and how to combine these skills, the knowledge to do this is not a technical skill. No doubt it can be learned, but it also comes from one's underlying beliefs and passions about children and the world. (D. T. Walsh, personal communication, April 28, 1994)

Teaching young children implies intensity and involvement on the part of the teacher (Katz, 1977; Hawkins, 1986). Teaching, educating children into citizenship, is Ana's life center, the core of her other activities, her search for meaning in the world (Ayers, 1989). It is her life project (Greene, 1987), her moral act (Tom, 1984). Hansen (1995) speaks of "vocation" as the possibility of an activity to have social value but also to bring a sense of personal fulfillment. According to Hansen (1995):

> the idea of teaching as a vocation calls attention to the personal and service oriented dimensions of the practice that draw people into it, and that enable them to find success despite adversity and difficulty. (p. xiv)

Ana has helped generations of young children and their parents to become meaning makers, authors of their own lives. Her personal and professional life—which cannot possibly be described in all its details in these pages—is a succession of struggles, difficult personal choices, but also a non-ending sense of professional commitment to young children. According to Polakow (1993):

> The most telling stories of at-risk children's success over the past three decades have been narratives of teachers as child watchers, sensitively turning the classroom to the developing child's questions—an existential pedagogy in which the child is encouraged to become a meaning maker, a builder of thoughts, an expressive and curious actor experimenting with the avant-garde of knowledge. (pp. 159-160)

Ana's "Voice" as a Pedagogical Tool for Teacher Education

In the past few months, Ana has retired. Nevertheless, in the School of Education where I teach, Ana just accepted responsibility for a workshop center for helping the "scaffolding"[6] of practicum student teachers, involving cooperating teachers and also helping former students of our School in their professional induction years. She will continue her cooperative work with other professionals and will document this work.

Ana's "voice" and others' "voices" about Ana have been used by myself in initial and graduate training in the Lisbon School of Education. I lead a course on teachers' professional development where graduate students are invited to work on their professional biographies, which are discussed throughout the course among colleagues and with me. The final paper is each student's socially reflected and co-constructed professional biography. The study of Ana is key to this course (Vasconcelos, 1997a).

We continue to have huge dilemmas on how to better train teachers (Katz & Raths, 1993, 1985; Hargreaves, 2000), especially guaranteeing their personal development. First-year initial training students were invited to read Ana's personal and professional biography (Vasconcelos, 1997a, chapter 4). After reading that biography, they started their own personal reflections, bringing visibility to their experiences in their own voices. From the beginning of their training, these young students are being invited to start thinking on their future professional role through the "clarifying act of writing" (Sartre). They are being challenged to "bring what is dangerous and subversive in [their] memories, as a possibility of action for change" (Araújo & Magalhães, 1999, p. 27). This process helps the progressive awakening of their future professional role that emerges from a systematic practice of citizenship (even as students) constructed and created with their own inner voices. According to Bruner (1986, p. 16) "narrative deals with the vicissitudes of human intentions, therefore being a human mode of thinking." Reflected experience (Dewey, 1938/1963; Zeichner, 1983) becomes an essential part of their formation process. They discover voice and the moral and cognitive meaning of that discovery (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger & Tarule, 1986; Carter, 1993).

For both preservice and graduate students, autobiographical narratives become a reflected appropriation of reality through a metacognitive process. The aim is to help teachers or future teachers to be able to pronounce, like Ana, from the core of their beings: "I am like this because I just can't be different." They are invited to integrate "their inner voices with the voice of reason, of the passionate reason" (Ruddick, 1984, p. 142) so that "the teaching act becomes the resonance of all [their] being" (Ashton-Warner, 1963).

Life stories can therefore become *pedagogical tools* for teacher education. The following are some of the refreshing, young voices of our preservice training students (Vasconcelos, 2000b):

> A teacher cannot be two persons; one that teaches the children, the other who has a family back home. Those two persons are interwoven. The teacher has to be able to unite those two facets.
>
> The teacher, above all has to conciliate her own needs with the interests of students, in a way that both feel well developing their tasks. A teacher should never forget that the activities have to be organized *with* her students and not *for* her students.
>
> Becoming a teacher is not a profession from 9 to 6. It is a choice. A mode of living.
>
> Just as a student will not learn if he or she feels sad, no teacher can fulfill her or his profession if her human condition, her thinking, will not be at peace.
>
> There is a moment in our lives when we feel the need for thinking autonomously, on our own, despite paying attention to other people's perspectives. We need to act according to our *inner consensus*.

Ana found her "inner consensus" through her mastery teaching. She will continue, in the future, her "caring citizenship" helping younger generations of teachers. Teaching is for her an "ethical act" of deep responsibility towards the children (and, presently, towards future teachers). French philosopher Lévinas comes to mind in these last words:

> My responsibility never ceases … nobody can do instead of me. I am responsible of a total responsibility, which answers for all the others, and for all that belongs to the others, even for their responsibility…. Responsibility is what I am supposed to do and that *humanly* I can't refuse. Responsibility is the supreme dignity of the human being. (Lévinas, 1988, p. 93)

I will end this paper with the translation of a sonnet by Portuguese poet Miguel Torga. It tells us about universal citizenship, commitment, and social responsibility. It recalls Ana. But it recalls also the figure of an amazing teacher educator, an inspiring writer, communicator, and researcher, to whom this paper is dedicated. A profound woman, a dear mentor of mine, my family: Lilian Katz. I chose and translated this poem for her:

Universalidade

Aqui declaro que não tem fronteiras.
Filho da sua pátria e do seu povo,
A mensagem que traz é um grito novo
Um metro de medir coisas inteiras

Redonda e quente como um grande abraço
De pólo a pólo, a sua humanidade,
Tendo raízes e localidade,
É um sonho aberto que fugiu do laço.

Vento da primavera que semeia
Nas montanhas, nos campos e na areia
A mesma lúcida semente,

Se parasse de medo no caminho
Também parava a vela do moinho
Que mói depois o pão de toda a gente.

(Miguel Torga, *Nihil Sibi*)

Being Universal

Here I declare she has no boundaries.
Daughter of her country and of her people,
The message she brings is a yet unheard scream:
A meter that measures whole things.

From North to South, her humanity is
Round, warm as a wide embrace,
With roots and a place,
She is a dream open that can't be laced.

Spring winds sowing seeds
Over the mountains, the fields or the sand:
The same bright seed.

If, in fear, she would happen to stop upon her path,
So would the windmill block
The mill that grinds everyone's bread.

(Miguel Torga, *Nihil Sibi,*
translation T. Vasconcelos & I. Allegro)

Notes

[1] In Portugal, kindergartens are usually separate settings from primary schools, and they receive children from 3 through 6 years old. They are led by specialized early childhood educators.

[2] "Thick description," a term introduced by anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973), has been defined by Denzin (1989) as going "beyond mere fact and surface appearances. It presents detail, context and emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another. Thick description evokes emotionality and self-feelings. It inserts history into experience. It establishes the significance of an experience, or the sequence of events, for the person or persons in question. In thick description, the voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard" (p. 83).

[3] At the heart of interpretive interactionism is thick description. Thick interpretation and deep authentic understanding help to make "the world of problematic lived experience of ordinary people directly available to the reader" (Denzin, 1989, p. 7).

[4] Denzin (1989), inspired by James Joyce's novels, describes epiphanies as "those interactional moments that leave marks on people's lives … have the potential for creating transformational experiences for the person" (p. 15).

[5] The Modern School Movement (MEM) is a cooperative teachers' movement founded in Portugal by Sérgio Niza and colleagues during the late sixties based on the pedagogy of French educator Célestin Freinet. During the years of Portuguese dictatorship, this Movement acted as a very important forum and setting for teacher organization—unions were then forbidden. MEM has a strong political and pedagogical commitment, and after democracy (1974), the Movement has been an important partner for new policies around early and primary years education.

[9] I use here the term scaffolding in the sense given by Bruner and associates (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976) to indicate the situation where adults support children so they may extend their competencies and present knowledge to higher levels of competency and knowledge. In a recent paper, I adapted this concept to pedagogical practice and supervision of student teachers (Vasconcelos, 1999).

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Enterprise Talk: A Handrail to Integrity and Authenticity

Tom Drummond

Abstract

"Enterprise Talk" is a measurable, practical guide for talking to children in times of difficulty and responding with effective positives. After discussing how teachers teach (i.e., teachers model; teachers inform; teachers respond positively to what they value), the paper talks about ineffective habits that are barriers to establishing a positive relationship between teacher and learner. The paper then discusses implementation of Enterprise Talk to help teachers set aside these ineffective habits. The components of Enterprise Talk are described, including prohibitions (i.e., no directions, no questions, and no praise) and guides for speaking and supporting behavior (i.e., descriptions, narrations, self-talk, nonverbal recognition, intrinsically phrased rewards, and descriptive cue sequence). Enterprise Talk reminds teachers to model, inform, and respond positively to what they value.

When used as a job description, the word "teaching" has solid meaning. It slips into formlessness when used to represent the labyrinthine complexity of facilitating educative experiences for individuals and groups. For the purpose of this discussion, I am using the word "teaching" to refer to a particular aspect of the endeavor—*the way we bring ourselves to the learners in the moment of here and now.* I believe we all can move closer to levels of excellence by exploring this aspect of teaching within the framework of what I call "Enterprise Talk."

I am not referring here to the stage-setting competencies of teaching—the all-consuming time and energy a teacher spends creating the physical conditions for the learners to experience, planning, gathering, documenting, and reflecting. This "before and after" side of teaching surely has its challenges. What I am addressing is the "with" side of teaching—the facilitative leadership component—the being with each child in an enhancing way—the managing of the social influences that support and sustain a learning community.

Teaching lives in the relationship a teacher has with the learner. At the same time as being true to ourselves, we, as teachers, face the challenge of being with learners in a way that allows the learners to be themselves, too. Great teachers are comfortable playing in the complexity and ambiguity of an enhancing interpersonal relationship—flowing freely and fearlessly—giving learners the gift of being completely present with unconditional, positive regard.

The quality of the relationship with each learner depends upon the teacher's ability, not only to be present in the moment, but also to be present with *integrity* and *authenticity*. Effective teaching, therefore, requires that teachers intentionally invest in clarifying what they value and truly being who they are. All good teachers I know have the courage to talk openly about their values and the wisdom to attend to their humanity:

- We have integrity when we steadfastly act as we say and believe.
- We are authentic when we are being, in each moment, true to the depth of our spirit.

As teachers "walk their talk" being true to themselves, they gradually form the person they are as teachers. Their effectiveness is increased by constantly reexamining their comfortable habits and observing with fresh eyes their relationships with learners. Their path is illuminated by what is true deep within their own humanity and reflected in their evolving understandings of what is best for learners. The quest for understanding is continuously present in each encounter. In these moments, teachers have the opportunity to lay aside ingrained habits and delve into alternative ways of being. Integrity and authenticity require teachers, in the moment of dissonance, to take risks in how they are acting with learners without firm, objective means of assurance. Any support they get for evolving out of mismatched habits comes in their own personal dawning awareness of finding themselves *being a richer way*.

When we, as teachers, discover that our professed values, such as eagerness and creative expression, are now present in the behavior of our learners, we become more assured that we have created the appropriate climate. We know we are traveling on the path of increasing effectiveness because we discover it under our feet. We face difficulty nurturing our own development, in this "being with learners" aspect of teaching, because we travel alone, with only our own feedback, which is often nebulous and delayed. Describing this process in words seems complex, but the process itself is essentially natural. Experiencing it requires maintaining the mirrors in which we see our actions and pursuing dialogue with others that supports the evolution of our own understanding. In order to have a dialogue about improvement, we have to find words that convey the goal. Teachers must know how to describe with assurance what it means when things are "right."

I offer here, therefore, a way to formulate, in language, the experience of success in teaching. I believe what I do is "right" when

- I see the learners doing what I value, and
- I am being the person I most want to be.

"Right" has both experiences aligned. Together they resonate, impelling learning forward.

The Learners Doing What I Value

As a preschool teacher, I treasured deep discussions with my colleagues about what we wanted to see happen for children. These both heated and laughter-filled discussions gradually clarified my values. Enterprise Talk evolved from that dialogue.

My colleagues and I were happy when we saw children being who they were, individually and uniquely, engaged in actions that they chose, at once benefiting themselves and the group. We enjoyed seeing children having fun, laughing, and being playful while doing real work, alone and with their peers, achieving group goals cooperatively. We liked seeing children willingly step into something new, staying focused on their intentions until they achieved their chosen ends. We were thrilled when children recognized the significance of their personal expression and when they spontaneously celebrated everyone's achievements. What emerged was a picture of children with *enterprise*, willing to venture with boldness into areas of risk.

I believe the experience of *enterprise* is possible for all children. I believe a worthy goal for early childhood education is to send all of our children into elementary schools as responsible individuals with a passion for exploring, expressing, and cooperating. I believe that, while maintaining the richness of our diversity, we can agree upon a set of values such as these that lie at the core of a cooperative learning community.

However, *teachers cannot make children be this way*. Learners grow in productive ways because they choose to. No amount of prodding creates *enterprise*. You can't push a string.

How We Really Teach

In pursuit of a deeper understanding of teaching, I have watched hundreds of hours of videotape, talking in detail with the teachers involved. Despite their individuality, I began to see how all the facilitative actions of great teachers fell into three fundamental categories:

Teachers model. They act as they want learners to act. If they want learners to be friendly toward each other, they are friendly. If they want people to laugh, they laugh. If they want the community to create beauty and order, they create beauty and order themselves.

Teachers inform. They tell about things. They describe happenings. They recount events. They tell stories. They explain. They talk about opportunities, problems, and possibilities. They share what they have seen and done.

Teachers respond positively to what they value. They take care to respond with warmth and support in a way that fits each individual. As they lead learners into areas of risk and potential incompetence, they support incremental goodness in the direction they wish learners to grow.

When I think of the people who have made the greatest difference in my life, I can see these fundamentals operating in our relationship. Each was an example of someone who lived a rich, full life in accord with his or her expressed ideals (*model*). Each told tales of his or her life and opened worlds of possibility and promise that were not present to me before (*inform*). When I took tentative steps into new endeavors, each was supportive and affirming (*respond positively*).

To model, inform, and respond positively is to choose a path that lets others be who they are. It leaves choices for them open and yet affects them strongly. These three fundamentals of teaching form the central basis of influence we have with others. The challenge is to learn to behave this way consistently, despite our habits.

Recognizing Habits

Whether we admit it or not, we are our habits—reacting in ways that we have practiced. Although we may profess an understanding of teaching, behaving as great teachers is tough. It is difficult for anyone to be other than how they have been.

When I am healthy… When I am rested… When life at home is calm… When the children seem to like what they are doing… When the moon and stars are in proper alignment… When you-know-who is absent… I can model the way I want children to be, inform without pushing, and spread warmth and good cheer. But, give me trouble, give me stress, test me with the unexpected, and I become a less flexible person. Out of my anxiety and discomfort, I speak in tones of disapproval and control. I find myself trapped in battles of will, and I hear myself complaining and casting blame. I snuff the children's spirit out like a candle. This is not the teacher I am inside, but it is the teacher I am being.

It is a paradox: when my children need teaching, my *being with* them, the most, I am not present. I have become old habits. I have lost my authenticity.

I want control, and I want compliance—the antithesis of *enterprise*—so my words and actions in that moment are not in accord with my expressed values. I have lost my integrity.

Being the Person I Most Want to Be

In times like this, I want a way to self-correct. I want a handrail—something solid to grasp—something to help me set aside these dominant, ineffective habits—something to help me create a positive path from within—something to rekindle my humanity, reminding me of my positive regard for children. If I spill milk, I want to clean it up.

I offer you Enterprise Talk, the handrail I have found to stay in accord with my integrity and authenticity. It is a measurable, practical guide for talking to children in times of difficulty and responding with effective positives. It is the means of maintaining a path you choose for yourself. It is a way for you to practice expressing yourself to children, in the moment, outside of the constraints of old habits. Enterprise Talk reminds you to model, inform, and respond positively to what you value.

Enterprise Talk

The Prohibitions

The first three rules of Enterprise Talk are No Directions, No Questions, and No Praise. Enterprise Talk forces you to set these habits aside and take on the challenge of finding another way to talk.

No Directions

"Sit down." "Hang your coat over there." "Put those on the shelf." "Use your words." "Stop that." "I need you to put it away."

I invite you to stop telling other people what to do. In some cases, directions constitute most of what teachers say to children. When a child is told what to do, he or she has only two choices: (1) do as requested—*acquiesce*, or (2) not do as requested—*rebel.* Neither acquiescence nor rebellion is a value I hold for children. I want children in my community to take the initiative to act responsibly for the good of themselves and the good of others. In environments filled with directions, children wait to do things until directed and become, in turn, directive with each other.

No Questions

"What are you supposed to be doing right now?" "Where does your coat go?" "How do you think she feels when you do that?" "What should you say to him?" "Why did you do that?"

I invite you to stop asking questions. Most of us have been told that asking questions is a good idea, and some types of questions are indeed worthwhile. Questions can encourage thinking, questions can inquire in conversations, and questions can test knowledge. Enterprise Talk does not prohibit these kinds of questions. For example, you can make natural inquiries in conversation ("When did your grandmother come?"), if you genuinely want to know. Often, however, teachers use questions to manage behavior, as in the collection above. I advocate stopping all questions initially, to heighten awareness of your own habits. Later, as the distinctions become clear, you can reinstate the kinds of questions that are genuine and successfully enhance learning.

No Praise

"Good job." "Good for you!" "Lovely." "I like the way Mary and Louise are sitting." "Nice, Jenny!"

I invite you to stop praising what children do. "That's a beautiful picture!" is praise, "Wow, another picture!" is not; the first passes a judgment upon the work, the second enthusiastically affirms its existence. No praise means stopping the *judgmental* positives, the phrases that contain opinions. Praise is contrary to *enterprise*: praise engenders approval seeking, rather than one's own sense of accomplishment; praise may not match the child's experience; praise is often more habitual than authentic; praise, if highlighting one child's work, may cause other children to see their efforts in a dimmer light. Praise often, therefore, does not work.

When people first hear these prohibitions, they are often aghast. These admonitions fly in the face of cultural ways of dealing with children. That is their purpose—to cork the tendency to blurt out—to give time to connect. Stopping the directions, questions, and praise opens the opportunity to access something more honest, effective, and consistent with your values.

The Guides

With habits blocked, the Guides of Enterprise Talk offer the means to express yourself with integrity and authenticity. The first three Guides—Descriptions, Narrations, and Self-Talk—help you formulate what you say in accord with what you value. Nonverbal Recognition and Intrinsically Phrased Rewards help you express genuine positives that light children's eyes. The Descriptive Cue Sequence helps you navigate around those times when you "just have to" get children to do something. Systematically employing the Guides will transform your teaching.

Descriptions

"You have a yellow bolt." "Four of you are working together." "Clouds of pink fill the page." "Those blocks are called quads." "The pen dried out." "It smells sour."

Descriptions convey in language what the child can perceive presently—what the child is now seeing, hearing, feeling, touching, smelling. Descriptions are the essence of being informative. Children hear the vocabulary encoding what they perceive. Descriptions make the acquisition of language easier and provide the power language gives to cognition. Descriptions give children freedom to attend to their interests, to be who they are in the moment, to explore, to invent, and to create.

Narrations

"You brought the stapler." "Jenny is folding the scarves." "You are filling it up to the very top." "Mark is handing out the cups." "Carlos joins us." "You hung up your coat."

Narrations put the child's actions into words as the child is doing it—like a sports announcer delivering play-by-play coverage of events as they occur. Descriptions are about *input* (what the child is taking in through the senses); Narrations are about *output* (what the child is doing at that moment). Besides teaching verb vocabulary, narrations reinforce the child's own initiative, implicitly validating what the child chose to do. Often actions an adult narrates will be repeated. If you say, "You jumped down!" after a child jumps, the probability is high the child will jump again.

Narrations can, however, be counterproductive. Used too often for insignificant actions, they can be annoying: "You opened the door." "You are walking to your cubby." "You are removing your coat." Used for actions you do *not* value, they may increase the occurrence of inappropriate behavior: "You bumped the table." "You knocked over their building." The challenge is to sprinkle the Narrations on only those emerging behaviors you want to build.

Self-Talk

"I am watching you." "I'll be right back." "I have to go get the lunch." "I saw you and Yolanda at the store." "My cat keeps licking the butter." "I enjoy seeing your paintings." "I have towels if you need them."

Self-Talk is about the adult's own actions, experiences, and thoughts that relate to the child's current situation. Most Self-Talk statements begin with "I..." In the context of being careful to model what you intend for children, your expression of what you see, think, and experience helps them share similarly with you. Enterprise Talk encourages you to return to expressing yourself honestly. The gift you bring to children is who you are, uniquely.

Together, the three ways to talk—Descriptions, Narrations, and Self-Talk—help you find something to say when stopped by the prohibitions. For example:

> You are headed inside with Shasha who has just hurt her finger and is crying. Mark and Terrance are squabbling over something they found in the corner of the play yard. You hear both of them screaming and you know nothing of the cause.
>
> Enterprise Talk creates this kind of dialogue internally: "Mark, give it to me... Oops, direction. Stop arguing. Can't say that either. This is hard. Start with I... where am I in this?"
>
> In the interim, words such as these have a chance to be created: "I am headed inside with Shasha. I can't help you two boys right now. I do want to know what you found. Shasha is bleeding. I can talk to you while I get her a bandage, if you want."

It is not easy at first, but following these Guides will allow you to express yourself honestly and in turn help you focus on being the person you want to be.

Enterprise Talk also points the way to cultivating effective expression of positives: Nonverbal Recognition and Intrinsically Phrased Rewards. The more teachers support the children who are doing what they desire, the less they have to direct.

Nonverbal Recognition

Winking. Smiling. Sending a positive message in the way you hold your body. A funny expression on your face. Silly noises. Wooo! Zowie! Yeah-yeah-YEAH!

Nonverbal recognition communicates pleasure in valued behavior by facial expressions and body language. It is difficult to overstate the marvelous power and effectiveness of nonverbal positive communication. You can slap hands with a child at the beginning of the year and still have it be warm and delightful at the end of the year. Nonverbals never seem to wear out.

I know a school that decided to try a Nonverbal Recognition Day. For one day, all the teachers decided to give more nonverbal positives to everyone—the other teachers, the children, the parents, the principal, the secretaries, the maintenance staff, the kitchen staff. They reported the best day ever. The children were happier, they behaved better, they worked harder, and staff reconfirmed their enthusiasm for their jobs.

Intrinsically Phrased Rewards

An *enterprise* classroom is self-perpetuating. Children keep taking initiative to be creative and responsible for *intrinsic* reasons, because their lives are richer, not because the adults are extrinsically reinforcing them with candy or stickers.

Examples of intrinsic rewards include the following: I brush my teeth because I feel better. I enjoy painting. I like having new ideas. I am a teacher because I find joy in enhancing the lives of others.

In the attempt to understand how to highlight for children their own positive feelings, I amassed as many words as I could find that described the satisfactions that support doing difficult and challenging endeavors. I culled the list to those that applied most directly to children and found they fit into four clusters.

- *Enjoyment: "It's fun to do, isn't it?"*
  pleasure, delight, happiness, thrill, joy, amusement, gratification, good feelings, savoring that inside, pride, satisfaction
- *Competence: "You did it!"*
  success, mastery, having the know-how, expertise, accomplishment, achievement, attainment, having a skill, able, capable
- *Cleverness: "That's tricky."*
  new ideas, uniqueness, brainy, smart, intelligent, bright, witty, sharp, ingenious, quick, original
- *Growth: "You're sure getting bigger!"*
  ready for new challenges, older now, choosing something new, more grown-up, more independent

We cannot provide intrinsic rewards, but we can talk about them as existing in our minds. To offer an Intrinsically Phrased Reward, I place one of these intrinsic concepts in a sentence that either talks about similar feelings in myself or offers that name for a feeling as a tentative possibility to describe the child's experience.

For example, a child shows me her painting. I can use each cluster to create a possible response:

> "I sure enjoy painting, too!"
>
> "You are indeed a painter."
>
> "It feels good to create something totally new, doesn't it?"
>
> "You couldn't paint like that last year!"

I found thinking of ways to phrase these comments was difficult to do in the beginning. I posted the cluster list on a large chart where I could refer to it and parents could see it, too.

When teachers highlight naturally occurring feelings of self-worth and self-satisfaction that accompany competent and socially constructive behavior in an authentic way, children light up with smiles.

One Way to Lead: Descriptive Cue Sequence

The Descriptive Cue Sequence addresses the problem of what to say in situations when you think it is imperative that children do what you have in mind, for example, getting them to clean up, put on their coats, or wash their hands. Using the steps in order, the teacher offers a way for children to take the initiative to act. Starting with the least control necessary each time, the sequence gradually obviates the need to direct.

The sequence begins with a cue, such as, "It's time to…" or a physical signal that means it is time to start—bell, flashing lights, or music:

1. Wait and respond. The teacher lets children respond to the signal within a reasonable length of time (approximately 15 to 20 seconds), recognizing children who take desirable actions with Descriptions, Narrations, or Nonverbal Recognition.

2. Describe what needs doing or where things associated with the action are. "The pens go back to the holder. Your coats are in your lockers."

3. Model the behavior you desire while describing your thoughts and decisions aloud with Self-talk. "This pen is left out. If it has no cap, it will dry out. I wonder where the cap is. Ah! There it is. I will put it on and place it where it is ready for use tomorrow." This demonstration may be used when the action is unfamiliar. If well known, the teacher simply uses Self-talk.

4. Issue a clear direction if, after a time, a child fails to voluntarily join the effort. While some children may take it upon themselves to do what is necessary, some children will resist. It may be possible to let the resistant alone until they choose to join in on their own initiative. If they do not, a direction may be appropriate.

5. Set a contingency. Teachers restrict participation in the next activity until the completion of the desired action. "When the water is off the floor, you can continue to play."

The sequence can be listed on a wall for teachers and parents to see. The procedure often stimulates conversations among the adults about compliance, responsibility, and respect for children.

Competency Acquisition—Making it Natural

Enterprise Talk is testable. Each of these six Guides is both observable and measurable. If it works, it is *right*. Creating new habits is never easy. According to Richard Boyatzis (1982), the acquisition of new competencies flows through six stages:

- Recognition—learning a new competency exists.
- Comprehension—understanding it by taking action to commence the process of acquiring the distinctions; trying it in one's life.
- Self-assessment—devising a way to assess the reality of performance in order for the learner to isolate deficits and hold onto strengths.
- Experimentation—playing around for a period of time, trying this way and that, modifying, ignoring, or changing, to see how something works in different situations.
- Practice—making a commitment to act this way 100% of the time, for at least a year.
- Natural Ability—letting go of the guides, when a handrail is no longer needed.

For self-assessment, I recommend sticking a piece of tape on the back of one hand and using a marker to tally. Most people start by counting the number of directions they give children for 20 minutes during a difficult time of the day. Afterwards, it is easy to stick the tape onto a record chart for comparisons over time. All nine components of Enterprise Talk are easy to count. The challenge is to decrease the Prohibitions—Directions, Questions, and Praise—and increase the Guides—Descriptions, Narrations, Self-Talk, Nonverbal Recognition, Intrinsically Phrased Rewards, and Descriptive Cue Sequence.

Teachers who have had the greatest success in implementing Enterprise Talk decided as a team to help each other out. They set goals for the week and eased the risks by laughing with each other over the struggle to change old habits. One teacher commented, "Using Enterprise Talk is like learning to swallow differently."

The Possibility of Integrity and Authenticity

Teachers of all age groups, infants to adults, have taken on the challenge of Enterprise Talk. People I know who have counted their talk habits and committed themselves to change are happier with their children and happier with themselves. No one I have known has ever wanted to return to the old way of being. Here is a sample of their words:

> Narration really stood out for me. Not only is it easy to do, but it takes the place of so much baloney I used to do. Much of that was simply to get my daughter to do things without igniting World War III. My old talk, "Good job, Tim. What a good boy!" has changed to "I see you cleaned your room." I had no idea this was so powerful. It works! Narration not only helps keep my children more aware of what is happening around them, it keeps them actively involved. My daughter starts to do all kinds of things when I start to narrate actions that I think are positive. My children love

> to hear me say what they are doing loud enough for others to hear. I have a lot of practice ahead, but I hope to be very good at using all the components of Enterprise Talk.
>
> The hardest part for me is not praising children's efforts, but I found yesterday that giving the children a high-five and smiling at them when they did a "correct" action (looking both ways before crossing the road) worked much better than stopping them and praising them. They were quite right to be proud. I did not remind them of anything, and they watched for cars by themselves.
>
> Enterprise Talk is a different approach to guiding children, and even adults, in learning. The idea of no directions, no questions, and no praise was foreign to my understanding of an appropriate way to teach. In fact, when I first heard about it, I was a little blown away. Of the six components, the most unusual for me was self-talk. I tried starting sentences with "I think..." or "I see..." to give the children suggestions on how to proceed in their activities. The results were astounding! I found the children were responding in such a way I never thought they could. Instead of giving an order, such as telling a child to pick up when she was done, I used self-talk. I said, "I see the art center still has some tissue paper and glue left out." The child I wanted to influence looked up, so I said, "I think the art area would be so much nicer if it was tidy for the next person who comes to do art." Then I stepped back and watched the results. The child I addressed the comment to (without a direction) stood up, walked over to the art area, and cleaned up the remainder of the tissue. He even straightened the papers in the paper box! I was amazed. Instead of saying, "Great job," I responded with "I think the art area is a lot more fun to be in when it is straightened up." The child looked a me with an expression of satisfaction on his face.

I invite you to step into a new future in your teaching. Enterprise Talk provides the opportunity for you to be proactive in becoming less controlling of children, honestly representing your values and your own desire to be fully present to them. The possibility is in your hands to create a future of *integrity*—actually being the teacher you say you are—and of *authenticity*—opening yourself honestly in each moment to the children you guide.

Nothing in Enterprise Talk tells you what to say or how to act. You make those decisions yourself—from your humanity—from being present moment to moment—from full participation in your relationship with children—approaching the richness to be gained from acting with integrity and authenticity. All who are willing to explore Enterprise Talk will attain a deeper understanding of leadership in teaching and be better able to create a classroom of happy, energetic, and enterprising children.

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Nurturing Phonemic Awareness and Alphabetic Knowledge in Pre-kindergartners

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Abstract

Reading research continues to identify phonemic awareness and knowledge of the alphabetic principle as key factors in the literacy acquisition process and to indicate that they greatly facilitate decoding efforts. While research indicates that phonemic awareness and alphabetic knowledge are necessary to literacy acquisition, many early childhood educators express concern about the instructional strategies used to address learning in this area. Reading experts have tended to emphasize the learning of skills, while early childhood specialists have tended to emphasize instructional strategies over content. The study described in this paper attempted to integrate the differing perspectives of reading specialists and early childhood specialists by exploring the role that language, specifically dialogue, plays as an instructional strategy specifically focused on phonemic and alphabetic knowledge in a pre-kindergarten classroom. The findings of the study are discussed through the examination of three students whose approach to literacy was each very different. The paper concludes that effective instruction requires teacher focus, reflection, and intersubjectivity—willingness to allow the children's context to permeate the classroom context—and that an effective means of accomplishing this goal is through the use of dialogue.

Purpose

Reading research continues to identify phonemic awareness and knowledge of the alphabetic principle as key factors in the literacy acquisition process and to indicate that they greatly facilitate decoding efforts (Byrne & Fielding-Barnsley, 1995; Ehri & Robbins, 1992; Ehri & Wilce, 1985; Torgeson, Morgan, & Davis, 1992; Wagner, Torgeson, & Rashotte, 1994; Ball & Blachman, 1991; McGuinness, McGuinness, & Donohue, 1995; MacLean, Bryant, & Bradley, 1987; Bryant, MacLean, Bradley, & Crossland, 1990; Lundberg, Frost, & Peterson, 1988; Moustafa, 1995). There is also evidence that phonological awareness facilitates the child's discovery of the alphabetic principle represented in the decoding process and that the decoding process, in turn, facilitates further development of phonological awareness (Share, 1995; Goswami & Bryant, 1990; McGuinness, McGuinness, & Donohue, 1995; Wagner, Torgeson, & Rashotte, 1994).

While research indicates that phonemic awareness and alphabetic knowledge are necessary to literacy acquisition, the joint International Reading Association/National Association for the Education of Young Children (1998) statement and the National Academy of Sciences report (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) express concern about the instructional strategies used to address learning in this area. Their concern stems from the need to identify strategies that are consistent with what is known about child development and how children learn most effectively. Reading experts have tended to emphasize the learning of skills. Early childhood specialists have tended to emphasize instructional strategies over content.

The purpose of the study discussed in this paper was to attempt to integrate the differing perspectives of reading specialists and early childhood specialists and explore an instructional strategy that may be effective in addressing the acquisition of phonemic awareness and alphabetic knowledge in preschoolers. To that end, the study examined language as a function of children's specific learning of phonemic and alphabetic knowledge. Because of the cultural aspects of language and literacy, any explanation of literacy acquisition must emphasize the sociocultural aspect of the process. The sociocultural perspective emphasizes that learning is constructed through interaction within a defined social context. Sulzby and Teale (1991) describe the social context of the process from a Vygotskian perspective that emphasizes "social interaction between a literate adult and the young child." They claim, "children acquire literacy through conversations and supported purposeful engagements in literacy events" (p. 730).

The development of language (a cultural tool) and cognitive development are so closely related that it is nearly impossible to view the two individually. This connection is illustrated by the 1989 study described in *Narratives from the Crib* in which Nelson, Bruner, Feldman, and others participated. In their analysis of the data, three commonalties emerged with regard to the ways in which language facilitates learning. To paraphrase,

- Language provides the representational form that provides both the vehicle and tool for thought.
- The structure embedded in language offers a framework that facilitates the organizational process—the "operational framework."
- The structure of language and the context in which it is used generally provide a further framework with which to organize the cognitive task—the contextual framework.

Cazden (1988) points out that classroom discourse is most often used as a part of the learning process to impart specific information, but it is not given focus as an instructional strategy for promoting intellectual engagement, challenge, or to scaffold learning. She emphasizes that internalization that is a result of scaffolding is consistent with the sociocultural theory of learning. Learning is not simply transferred from the more knowledgeable other to the learner, nor is it a process of the learner "discovering" the "right." It is a process of, Cazden (1988) quotes Bruner, "go[ing] beyond the information given" (p. 108). Cazden's (1988) discussion of the function of classroom discourse is consistent with the work of Clay (1998); Tharp and Gallimore (1988); Moll and Whitmore (1993); Palincsar, Brown, and Campione (1993); Chang-Wells and Wells (1993); and Rogoff (1990) in which they examine classroom dialogue as a strategy for intellectual engagement or challenge. The specific learning content focused on in this paper is phonemic and alphabetic knowledge. It is evident that there is considerable variation in the meaning attributed to the two terms (Durkin, 1980, 1993; Goswami & Bryant, 1990; Share, 1995; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; IRA/NAEYC, 1998; Sulzby & Teale, 1991). The definition of the term phonemic awareness seems to be emerging as research continues to increase our understanding of the reading process. For the purposes of this paper, the term phonemic awareness is defined as "a child's auditory discrimination of and conscious understanding that speech is composed of identifiable units such as spoken words, syllables, and sounds."

The alphabetic principle is also a term for which a common definition is somewhat elusive (Neuman, Copple, & Bredekamp, 1999; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Durkin, 1993; Sulzby & Teale, 1991; Goswami & Bryant, 1990). The commonality in views across the literature, however, is the child's understanding that there is a systematic relationship between the sounds of letters in spoken words and their graphic representation.

The paper examines the role that language, specifically dialogue, plays as an instructional strategy specifically focused on phonemic and alphabetic knowledge in a pre-kindergarten classroom. The term dialogue, as opposed to discourse, is used throughout the paper because it reflects the intersubjective nature necessary in communication that facilitates the construction of knowledge. The definition of dialogue used is a verbal exchange that exhibits intersubjectivity, in this case focused upon phonemic and alphabetic knowledge. The definition is consistent with the work of Vygotsky (Cole et al., 1978), Clay (1998), Rogoff (1990), Cazden (1988), and Tharp and Gallimore (1988).

Methods

The research approach in this study was a qualitative one. Walsh, Tobin, and Graue (1993) suggest that the qualitative approach that is most useful for the field is that which Erikson termed "interpretive" (p. 464).

The elements of interpretive research require, among other things, that observations be contextualized, conducted in a natural setting, and be prolonged and repetitive.

Participants in the program were 4- and 5-year-old children who had been screened by school district personnel and determined to be eligible for participation by criteria established by the district. Environmental and social factors were considered as well as results obtained through play-based screening.

The data collected in this study were the teacher's and children's dialogue as they related to phonemic awareness. Data were collected through classroom observation of children. Observations were conducted for two hours each in morning and afternoon sessions of a pre-kindergarten classroom. Seventeen observations occurred from the end of October to mid-May. Observations were handwritten and recorded using audiotape. In addition, samples of the children's writing, drawing, and other literacy-related materials were collected.

A checklist of common phonemic awareness and alphabetic behaviors was developed from the literature cited. Dialogue was coded by phonemic/alphabetic behavior and charted for each child by observation sessions, visually representing the content of dialogue over time. The following is a list of the phonemic awareness behaviors:

- Names some letters.
- Recognizes letters in print.
- Knows some letter-sound relationships.
- Distinguishes initial letter in words.
- Distinguishes ending letter in words.
- Talks about letters.
- Attempts to re-read what he has written by paraphrasing.
- Attempts to re-read what he has written by decoding sounds.
- Recognizes rhymes (words that sound alike).
- Can produce a rhyme.
- Recognizes/talks about graphic characteristics of letters and words.

The following behaviors were included because they support and provide the context for the more specific behaviors:

- Talks about letters: General dialogue about letters.
- Talks about letter graphics: Dialogue about the distinguishing physical features of letter graphics.
- Talks about writing: Dialogue about writing in general, the process, the need to do it, its presence in the classroom.
- Talks about reading: Dialogue about reading, the process.

Results

The classroom in this study operated from the assumption that reading and writing are an integral function of the classroom culture or community and that everyone would participate in reading and writing on whatever level they were capable. All literacy behaviors were accepted.

The classroom routine included two daily story times, one that typically introduced activities and one that closed and summarized activities. The classroom had well-supplied writing, computer, and art centers. There was a classroom library, but books were also a part of the writing center, the dramatic play area, and the block area. The children's own emergent writing was carefully and attractively displayed throughout the classroom.

The group area housed the classroom library and displayed the calendar and the daily leader chart. The teacher posted the group-made lists, language experience charts, and group-meeting projects that supported the current topic of study. The dramatic play area included materials as well. In the art center was also a chart for classroom book check-out with a labeled pocket for each child and the storage of portfolios, which the children routinely review upon the completion of a topic. The environment and daily routine provided a kind of tacit instruction (Moll & Greenberg, 1990; Rogoff, 1990; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Cole et al., 1978).

The findings of the study, which follow, are discussed through the examination of three students whose approach to literacy was each very different.

Aaron

Aaron came to school with an understanding of the functions of reading. He came with the belief that he was already a functioning literate individual. Literacy was not a mystery that needed to be solved but a function that he was competent in fulfilling. Aaron was also a very social individual, and literacy seemed to be most meaningful for him when he could use it within the context of social interaction. Classroom observations suggested that he had a role model who read at home. The response from the parent survey indicated that Aaron used writing utensils at home and enjoyed doing so. The survey responses also indicated that he used books on a daily basis, implementing a variety of strategies for "independent" reading. The parent survey reported that he knew only four or five letters.

The record of classroom observations revealed a conversation with Aaron's father early in February suggesting additional emerging knowledge of letters. The teacher shared information that Aaron had announced in the classroom that he was going to write the letters of the alphabet. He proceeded to do so—A through M. While the survey indicated that Aaron did not have any particular resources that related to letters, other than his books, Aaron's father mentioned in conversation with the teacher that Aaron used a computer program that had the alphabet as its focus.

One of the first observations of Aaron was an episode between Aaron and his classmates on November 15 that demonstrated his level of sophistication with regard to literacy and his use of literacy as a part of social interaction:

> Layne, Aubrey, and Aaron had taken responsibility for the project that was stationed at the writing center. They hailed their fellow classmates as they arrived in the classroom.
>
> Layne: Hey, Sammi, Kari. Come over here. We have a question for you. Are you wearing new shoes?
>
> Aaron: This is "YES." And this is "NO."
>
> He pointed to the words as he said them.

But while Aaron's behavior suggested word awareness, other data suggest that his understanding, at this point, was global in nature, recognition of the graphic patterns of the words rather than a connection between letters and their sounds. This conclusion was confirmed by observations made on December 13 in which Aaron recognized the names of a couple of his classmates while working on a sociogram with the teacher. At this point, Aaron was writing his name Aarn or Arn. The teacher continued to accept Aaron's level of literacy without question.

On December 20, the children were asked to choose the ending to the story that had been read aloud to the group. Aaron recognized the word NO, pointed to it, and wrote it. In the dialogue that accompanied his work on this project, the teacher spelled the word NO for him, pointing at the letters as she said them and pointing out that the N was a letter that he had in his own name.

From that point on, Aaron's behavior indicated a greater attention to the letters that composed his name. Several samples in January document that he was writing his name with all the necessary letters. On occasion after that, his name appeared as AAORN or AARN or ARON, but for the most part, his behavior indicated a greater attention to individual letters. When he copied words, all the letters were present and in pretty much the right order.

For the most part, he had still not made a clear connection between the letter graphics and their names or sounds, but he continued to develop his understanding of one-to-one correspondence and that words did have a particular format. This observation was documented in the following excerpt from March 13:

> Aaron has brought in his Pokeman cards. He draws a couple of Pokeman figures that are pictured and then sits back.
>
> Aaron: I'm going to read my Pokeman book.
>
> Aaron takes the calculator, and says he's going to write Pokeman. He makes some entries on the calculator by pushing the entry keys.

> Aaron: Does this spell Pokeman?
>
> R: Aaron, the calculator has numbers on it, not letters. You can spell Pokeman on the computer.
>
> Aaron insists that he can write Pokeman. He enters something into the calculator and then refers to his magazine and puts his finger on the print to see the name. At the end of March when the children make portfolio folders for the "PAPER" topic of study, Aaron writes PAP and below it, because he has run out of space, ER.

Literacy in and of itself, however, seemed almost secondary to Aaron. He used it as a tool to enhance his social relationships and to attempt to gain information. He often brought his Pokeman book or cards to school and shared a discussion of the literature with his friends. They talked about the different characters, what they looked like, what their names were, and what they could do. Towards the end of the school year, he attempted to write some words on his own. The teacher reported that he used the leader chart with great regularity to determine who was the classroom leader each day.

Reading seemed more important to Aaron than writing. He viewed reading as an activity for gaining information, primarily from pictures, as his use of the materials he brought from home indicated. He did not discuss the writing process except when the teacher initiated discussion. He talked about reading and writing in general, letters and their names, but not graphic characteristics—perhaps because he had already mastered the skill of graphic representation. It was not until the end of the school year that he began to recognize the connection between information gathering and print. He then began to attend more closely to the graphics of print and to understand his role as a creator of print.

Eric

Eric's fine motor skills were exceptionally well developed, probably somewhat as a result of his incredible creativity. His mother reported through the parent survey that he had available a rather substantial variety of writing utensils that he used at home. His drawings included both detail and action, though his creativity was not limited to drawing. His learning style seemed to be highly visual.

His mother also reported that he was read to nearly daily and enjoyed it greatly. He did not, however, attempt to read on his own. The data document early that he was aware that he was unable to read in a conventional manner. The survey response also indicated that Eric was able to say the letters of the alphabet and recognize the letters in his name. What the data indicate was that even though he was able to graphically produce all the letters of the alphabet, Eric's knowledge of the connection between letter graphics and their names was present only when it was scaffolded. He could reproduce a letter given a graphic description, but initially he was unable to name even the letters in his name.

Even though Eric began the school year able to write his name very clearly and to copy whatever letters he chose, he did not initially exhibit much interest in utilizing this skill in creating his own words. As the year progressed, he recognized the value of using writing as a function to enhance his creativity. He also recognized literacy as a function for expressing affection. When his interest in including words began, he requested that the teacher write the words for him. As his interest grew, he often asked her to tell him the letter names and describe their graphic characteristics so that he could write them himself.

But it was not really until mid-December that Eric began to exhibit an interest in writing. On December 13, Eric approached the teacher and told her that he wanted to write "I love my mom. Hugs and kisses." The ensuing instruction occurred as a part of the child's desire to write a note to his mother. There was focus given to the nature of the orthographic system, and sound-letter relationships were addressed:

> Teacher: "Mom." What sound do you hear in "mom?"
>
> Eric: I don't know.
>
> Teacher: Listen again. It's in "My."
>
> Eric: Mmmmm

> Teacher: Mmmm. That's it.
>
> Eric: How do you make an "M."
>
> Teacher: Well, look.
>
> Eric: I...(pointing at the word mi [my] that he's written).
>
> Teacher: That's [my]. That's [my]. So what goes in "Mom?"
>
> Eric: uhhhh....Oh! This one?
>
> Teacher: Yup. That's the same one. What letter is that?

The recognition and naming of letters were also addressed throughout the sequence. The teacher encouraged Eric to read what he was writing as they progressed in the writing activity.

In mid-March, the data document another extensive dialogue between the teacher and Eric. Eric had spent a good deal of the choice time on March 13 drawing a series of eight pictures. He came to the teacher and told her that he wanted to write "I Want to Be a Funny Boy." The result of the dialogue was that Eric dictated the story and the teacher asked him to write the title page. In the course of the dialogue, Eric revealed that he wanted to write funny stories like Robert Munsch. Eric had been involved in making the Robert Munsch chart that the class used as they read his books.

To summarize, Eric progressed over the school year from primarily drawing to incorporating writing on a routine basis. He was, at that point, more interested in exploring the functions of literacy than applying his energy in acquiring the requisite skills for using it independently, although it appeared as though the desire was emerging. He used literacy primarily as a tool for enriching the products of his creativity, but he, at that point, was more interested in what the tool could produce than how it worked. There seemed to be little dialogue around the teacher-planned activities in the classroom. Most of the teacher-Eric dialogue occurred around the projects that Eric himself designed.

Sammi

Sammi lived with both her mother and father in a joint custody arrangement. The parent survey that was completed by her father indicated that Sammi was read to on a daily basis, that she had writing utensils available for use, that she attempted to read some books on her own—primarily from memory—and that she had some toys that involved the alphabet.

Sammi entered the classroom at the beginning of the year with well-developed fine motor skills. She was able to write her name from the start. The data reveal that Sammi's greatest interest in utilizing her literacy skills was in writing the names of the people in her family. On October 25, the teacher talked with the children during group time about the writing that some of them had done:

> Teacher: Sammi, you wrote some names too. What did you write?
>
> Sammi named the people in her family whose names she had written.
>
> Teacher: Did you write Kenny? (her brother)
>
> Sammi: K...E...N...N...Y. (Sammi spells the name.)

During the choice portion of the daily schedule, Sammi often spent some time in the writing center independently "writing notes" to her mother or father. On November 15, she drew a face and wrote the word DAD on two pages. The pages were folded, inserted into an envelope, and addressed to D...A...D. In this instance, her activity occurred near the end of the choice period of the schedule. She finished her note to her dad and began to join the group that was forming in the group area, but she then returned to the writing center stating "I need to write to mom, too. She likes pink." Her voice trailed off and became inaudible as she worked:

> R: Tell me what it says.
>
> Sammi: Me, Dad, Mom, [her brother], my dog.
>
> R: What's your dog's name?
>
> Sammi: Holly.

She spelled all the names, including the name of her dog. Sammi's skill in accomplishing this feat was revealing in a couple of ways. First, the ease with which she accomplished the task would support the observation that she wrote her family names often. It also indicated that she possessed a knowledge of letter graphics and letter names and was able to correlate the two. In October, Sammi took a long strip of paper and wrote the entire alphabet to V on one piece and then continued with X…Y…Z and her name on a second piece of paper.

But while she had the ability to graphically record each of the letters, she seemed not to have the grasp of visual graphic patterns that some of the other children had. In February, while preparing valentines, she asked Eric whether the name that she had selected from the name ring was his name or Ed's. She recognized the E as the letter that started Eric's name, but she did not recognize the general graphic pattern of his name.

By mid-February, Sammi had begun to include others in her name-writing episodes. She wrote a note with the teacher's name on it and gave it to her. When Jacob gave her candy hearts with messages printed on them, she inquired as to its message and then put her name and Jacob's on a valentine to give to him. In May when a second sociogram was completed with the children, Sammi independently recognized and copied the names that she wanted included.

Even in spring, the pictures of and notes to dad and mom continued. Sammi had taken her interest and skill to a new level, however. In April, in writing a story, she phonetically sounded out the word ME in a story about DAD.

Sammi seemed to use her literacy skill in very social ways, to connect with others and define social relationships. This interest expanded from her family alone to her teacher and her classmates as her relationships expanded throughout the year, but as the April story episode indicates, she was still connecting the use of her skills to her relationships with her family. She did not make a distinction between the different households in which she lived, but named all members of the family, at times making a conscious effort to include both parents in her work. There was a picture of MOM that was documented at the same time as the story of ME and DAD.

For Sammi, as for others, there seemed to be more dialogue around those independently designed activities than around the teacher-designed activities, which she completed easily and without much inquiry.

Discussion

Katz (1995) states:

> The distinction between what children *can do* and what they *should do* is especially serious in early childhood education because most young children are eager to please their teachers and appear willing to do almost anything asked of them…. However, children's willingness and enjoyment are potentially misleading criteria for judging the appropriateness of pedagogical practices. Instead, estimates of the possible delayed impacts and cumulative effects of practices must be considered. (p. 107)

The fact that the acquisition of literacy is such a critical piece to all that follows in education makes the issue of identifying appropriate and effective instructional strategies that facilitate it one that must be addressed. While the way in which young children learn has not changed, our understanding of how they learn has deepened. Learning to read is a cognitive activity. Examining learning theory and using it as a means to validate or invalidate instructional strategies can be helpful.

Vygotsky (Cole et al., 1978) believed that learning occurred within the context of social interaction. He also believed that learning precedes and facilitates development and that language facilitates the process of thought or cognition.

Nelson (1996), in discussing the social construction of knowledge, states that the primary function of cognition for the child "is to make sense of her situated place in order to take a skillful part in its activities." She states that this process must be accomplished through a process of "collaborative constructionism in which the child's individual cognitive activity is as crucial as the interaction with the knowing social world." Rogoff (1990) emphasizes the need for the learning context to have an intersubjective nature.

Bruner's hypothesis is that one of children's first developmental tasks is to order the undifferentiated life components of action, thought, and affect (Bruner & Haste, 1987). He believes that language, especially narrative, is an effective means of accomplishing this task.

Cazden (1988) states that classroom language should be related to the child's experiences, used to negotiate shared meaning and understanding, and should be used to achieve cognitive engagement. She emphasizes the need for the teacher to be skilled in improvisation. Clay (1998) states, "Just as the listener tunes in to a speaker, so a teacher must observe, listen to and tune in to a learner" (p. 13).

Young children come to school in the early years with their own contexts and stories—those that they bring from their homes. These beliefs imply that one of the teacher's primary roles in instruction is to serve as a strategist and negotiator. She must determine the child's context (and functional developmental level) and negotiate a plan for facilitating the child's discovery of how the literacy knowledge that she brings to the classroom can be utilized (and extended in the child's zone of proximal development) within the functions of the classroom context—in other words, how the child's context can become a part of the classroom context and how the classroom context can become a part of the child's context in designing the learning that could occur.

The teacher in this study has considerable skill as a context negotiator. Eric's context was dominated by his creative energy. The teacher facilitated Eric's use of literacy in enhancing his creative projects. Aaron came to school from a context rich in the functions of literacy and one that allowed him to be a participant in those functions. Aaron was allowed to bring the tools of his home functions of literacy to class and weave them into the classroom curriculum as he grew in his understanding of what it was to function in a literate manner. Sammi is the enigma. She came to the classroom from a context in which it is obvious that literacy is important, and she came with considerable skills for her age. However, the context of her skills was extremely personal. It seemed more difficult to engage her in a literacy focus that challenged her existing skills. The teacher accepted Sammi's use of literacy in meeting her personal needs. Towards the end of the year, it became evident in the story-writing episode that Sammi was ready to expand her personal literacy context in a way that included some aspects of the school context in her encoding activity.

There were several "Sammi's" between the two classes. They were the children whose skills were adequate, or more than adequate, allowing them to function within the classroom literacy environment without allowing the classroom context to permeate their personal context.

The dialogue data indicate that the greatest amount of dialogue occurred when cognitive dissonance was present or when functions entered a child's zone of proximal development. The mismatch between the child's context or functional level and the classroom context provided a point of engagement between the child and the teacher. This is possible only when there is intersubjectivity, when the child's and the classroom's contexts have permeated each other.

Finally, the disposition (Katz, 1995) of the teacher must be addressed. There must be an approach to teaching and learning that allows for and facilitates intersubjectivity and improvisation. It develops in an effective manner only when there is an attitude of reflection. The following remarks indicate the approach of the teacher in this study:

> ...I have re-examined why I do many things. I thought I had a literacy-rich environment before this process, with graphs and charts and webs. However *children* now add more to the environment. [Italics original]
>
> I am more convinced than ever that information must directly relate to children's lives to become relevant for them. And they must have time to explore the many options that a topic suggests. The younger they are, the more tangible it needs to be.... At the same time, someone must be in their lives, a teacher or a parent, who asks critical thinking questions that confirm what a child knows and expands an understanding of an idea.

In her introduction to *Other People's Words*, Purcell-Gates (1995) states:

> Members of these varied cultural groups, including teachers, curriculum designers, and the children are not perceiving the schooling experience in identical ways. They are in many ways living in different worlds though ostensibly engaging in the same activity—schooling—in the same place—the classroom. (p. 5)

Effective instruction requires teacher focus, reflection, and intersubjectivity—willingness to allow the children's context to permeate the classroom context. An effective means of accomplishing this goal is through the use of dialogue.

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The Project Approach Revisited

Documentation in a Lab School Setting: Teaching New Teachers to Document

Sallee Beneke

Abstract

The process of documentation helps teachers to inform their teaching. This paper discusses the strategies that have been useful in teaching students in a community college early childhood education program to learn to document. These experiences include learning two theoretical frameworks, classroom observation skills, systematic portfolio collection, and documentation for display.

Over the past five years at Illinois Valley Community College (IVCC), we have worked to create a process and a setting that support the growth of teachers-in-training in the use of documentation. We have attempted to create a process that gradually leads student teachers to a deeper understanding of the value of documentation by giving them progressively more challenging experiences in putting theory into practice. In general, we support this growth by providing theory and examples in an adult classroom setting, opportunities and instruction for documentation of adult projects, opportunities and instruction in documentation of children's learning in an apprentice-type relationship, and public display of student and teacher documentation. We believe that instruction, modeling, and opportunities for application will help student teachers develop the knowledge, dispositions, and skills they will need to continue documentation practices when they leave our program.

Introduction through Coursework

Our lab school, the IVCC Early Childhood Education Center, is part of the Early Childhood Education program at Illinois Valley Community College. Students in the program have their first student teaching experience, Practicum 1, in our center. However, prior to the student teaching experience, the students are required to take a course that we call *Project Approach/Documentation*. This course began as an optional 1-credit evening course and has gradually evolved to its current status as a required 3-credit course. In this course, students study the Project Approach, as popularized by Lilian Katz and Sylvia Chard (2000), and they explore two frameworks for documenting project work as well as methods for organizing and displaying documentation (Helm, Beneke, & Steinheimer, 1998). They also learn about the Work Sampling System, a systematic method for assessing young children that includes both a portfolio and a checklist (Meisels et al., 1994).

An effort is made in this course to give students hands-on experience with the practices that relate to the theory that is presented. For example, during the semester, small groups of students develop their own project investigations that stem from a general topic selected by the instructor. Time is made available to the students to perform the investigations during class, and an attempt is made to synchronize instruction about the features of the three phases of projects with the project work of the students. As the students' projects get underway, theories and practices of documentation, as presented in *Windows on Learning*, are also explained. Materials, time, and equipment are made available to the students to document the project work completed by their group. The small groups of students work together to prepare a trifold panel that documents their project and opens a "window on a learning experience" and a "window for teacher self-reflection" (Helm, Beneke, & Steinheimer, 1998, p. 25). This type of documentation has its limitations, since the students are documenting their own learning, not that of children. However, it does give them the opportunity to learn to use the materials and technology that can contribute to their ability to document. These materials and equipment are housed in our Parent-Teacher Resource Center, which is adjacent to the adult classroom. The resources that students have access to in this center include two computers, a scanner, color printer, software programs useful for desktop publishing, laminator, bookbinder, digital camera, a small curriculum library, and many art materials. The course instructor is available during office hours, and by appointment, for individual and small-group instruction and assistance.

Through this course, students are able to see examples of project work and documentation that were produced by the children and teachers at our center. These samples send a powerful message that the material we are covering in class has an important place in a real classroom setting. They are able to tour the center and see how the documentation panels are displayed as an important part of the environment. Presenting examples of project work and documentation from other centers also serves to further support their understanding of the usefulness of documentation.

Some firsthand experience with using the Work Sampling System is also a part of this prerequisite course. Students use items from the Work Sampling Checklist (Meisels et al., 1994) to observe children in the Early Childhood Center, and they use the *Omnibus Guidelines* (Jablon, Marsden, Meisels, & Dichtelmiller, 1994), a book of developmental guidelines, to help them interpret their observations. The lab school makes a significant contribution to the training that we are able to offer students in this area of documentation. Many portfolios of individual children's work are available from the center collection. Students explore these and use them to make decisions about curriculum planning in mock exercises, as part of the course.

Apprenticeship in the Lab School

In Practicum I, students begin to document children's learning on a limited basis within our lab school setting. Members of the teaching staff select an overall project topic to begin the semester, and the students plan lessons and activities that support the development of the project. Each student is required to produce a trifold documentation panel that includes a "window on a child" and a "window on a learning experience" (Helm, Beneke, & Steinheimer, 1998). Cameras, film, developing materials, clipboards, Post-its, tape recorders, video camera with LCD panel, and a digital camera are available in the classroom for use by student teachers and teachers. The students follow some simple content and quality guidelines for creating a first documentation panel.

Content guidelines include the following:

- Include a summary of the overall project (for example, a brief project history; major concepts, skills, and dispositions that are evident; names of teachers and student teachers; ages of children; name of school or center).
- Include dated samples of children's work that reveal growth.
- Include photographs that reveal the learning process.
- Use a title to explain the content of each section when using a trifold panel.
- Include a variety of types of documentation (for example, samples of children's comments or conversations that help the viewer understand their thinking).
- Explain the significance of each item included.
- Include artifacts from the project in the display.
- Explain what was learned and how it was learned.
- Reveal the growth in understanding, skills, or dispositions of one or more children.

- Include your reflections regarding your role in the learning experience.

Construction and aesthetic qualities guidelines include the following:

- Trim all items neatly (be sure there are no ragged edges or crooked sides).
- Avoid the "polka-dot effect" produced by the use of many like-sized photographs.
- Arrange items so that the display is pleasing to the eye.
- Attach photos and samples neatly to the panel (tape or adhesive should not show).
- Avoid using rubber cement—it doesn't last over time (double-stick tape works well).
- Use only one color when colored borders are used to mount documentation.
- Use subtle paint or covering as a background on the panel, so it does not distract from the documentation.
- Make sure scanned or copied photos or artwork are not distorted.
- Attach clear plastic bags or sleeves to hold large objects, such as videotapes, that are meant to be removed and viewed.
- Make an effort to include three-dimensional elements in the display.
- Correct all spelling and grammar.
- Use at a minimum a 16-point type font.

While the student teachers are attempting to document the learning of the children within the project, the classroom teachers are available to model the process of documentation and the disposition to document as they collect and prepare documentation on those children not assigned to student teachers. In addition, the instructor of the practicum course is also the director of the center. Her office is on-site at the center, and she is able to observe and advise student teachers on an ongoing basis. Each student teacher has an individual weekly meeting with the practicum instructor in the Resource Center to talk over the student's questions and concerns. Each student teacher has a file on the instructor's computer, and the instructor types brief notes during this meeting and saves them to the student teacher's file. The student teacher and the course instructor each leave every meeting with notes. The notes of these meetings often provide useful documentation of the student teacher's knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

Another way that students document children's learning in our lab school is by using the Work Sampling System. Each student assesses one child in seven domains on the checklist. The domains are math, science, language and literacy, the arts, physical development, social studies, and personal social development. The students also collect samples of children's work in five domains for a portfolio, and at the end of the semester, the student prepares a narrative report describing the child's development, including goals for the following semester. The students share this report with the child's parents in a parent-teacher conference at the end of the semester.

Students in Practicum I are in attendance at our center for only six hours per week, so their opportunities to document are somewhat limited. One way that we have found to compensate for this limitation is to post a large portfolio collection sheet for each child in the classroom. The sheet is divided into rectangles that represent the domains. As a staff member or student observes or collects a sample that might satisfy a requirement for a child, they write it on a Post-it and place it on the child's sheet. Students and teachers use this sheet to collect anecdotes for each other. For example, if one student leaves a note documenting something a child has accomplished in the social studies domain, the student teacher who is preparing the portfolio on that child can take the Post-it and add it to her collection of documentation when she comes in. Knowing that their brief anecdotal notes must be understood by another teacher encourages the students to build their skills in writing succinct narrative.

Another easy way that we have found to collect documentation for student teachers and teachers is to place collection boxes labeled with each child's name in the classroom. These boxes are conveniently accessible to both the teachers and the children. Both children and teachers often add samples of children's work that they are proud of to these boxes. As in the case of the portfolio collection sheets, these boxes provide a way for the many people who are in and out of our classroom to assist each other in documenting children's learning.

The staff daily journal is another useful means of collecting documentation in the center. This journal is on a clipboard that hangs in the office. Center staff members regularly make entries in this journal, and student teachers are required to spend five minutes at the end of each day in the classroom making an entry. A new, dated page is added each morning, and simple "thought joggers" are written at the top of the page: "What are your thoughts on the progress of the project? What's working? What's not? What went well today? What didn't? Why? Did anything unusual happen?" Teachers and student teachers often revisit these entries as they put together narrative for documentation panels.

Public Display of Documentation

By the end of the semester, we have a panel from each student teacher and often two or more panels from the classroom teachers. We put these panels on display in the hallways of our center for a few weeks, and then we often move them to the lighted display cases in highly traveled hallways of the main campus building at IVCC. Sometimes, as in the case of the Car Project (Beneke, 1998), the children's documentation of their own project is displayed alongside the teacher's.

Since they have traveled these hallways for some time prior to beginning their work at the lab school, the students have often seen similar displays created by prior student teachers and staff. This opportunity to display is their turn to reveal what they have learned about children, learning, and teaching. They often assist in putting the panels up for display and show a great deal of pride in their accomplishment.

In addition, we try to involve students in teacher meetings and inservice meetings where they can display their panels. In the year 2000, our students displayed their work at the state Association for the Education of Young Children conference and at the Illinois Project Group Meeting (Beneke, 2000).

A Journey, Not a Destination

Our efforts and understanding of how to support students in developing the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will help them become effective documenters have grown and changed over the past five years. Many smaller components of this aspect of our teacher training program have grown and evolved, while some earlier components have gone by the wayside. The responses of each new set of student teachers have helped us make many of these decisions. Much in the same way that we advise teachers of young children to use observation and documentation to help them decide what and how to teach, our teaching has been shaped by the observation and documentation of our student teachers as they learn to document. I believe this is a challenging, creative, interesting, and useful way for college instructors to teach, as well as early childhood educators.

In the same way that we encourage the student teachers to use each other and the classroom teachers as resources, we believe we can benefit by sharing our understanding with others who train teachers in the process of documentation. We believe that there is much that we can learn from the experiences of others, and we hope that we have something to contribute.

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The Project Approach: Three Avenues of Engagement

Ann-Marie Clark

Abstract

This paper examines the rationale of the spirit, material, and method of education behind the Project Approach. The paper describes some of the conditions and opportunities offered by project work that support children's dispositions to become lifelong learners and presents a model of three avenues of engagement for the mind of the child as it functions intellectually and socially within the contexts made possible by the Project Approach: curiosity, creativity, and communication.

The current demand for accountability in education circles places an emphasis on improving student performance on standardized tests. Scores on these tests represent numeric indices of children's acquisition of facts and the skills used to manipulate these facts. Debates focus on the allocation of minutes in teacher's schedules to particular subject matter in order to optimize the use of school time for increasing valued outcomes. With so much attention directed toward quantitative measures of teaching and learning in the current dialectics of educational discourse, the notion of the *quality* of children's life (time spent) in school seems almost inconsequential.

However, New (1998) reminds us that Dewey advised educators to consider closely the differences that the *spirit, material, and method of education* can make in the nature of the social life of schooling:

> To say that education is a social function, securing direction and development in the immature through their participation in the life of the group to which they belong, is to say in effect that education will vary with the *quality of life* [italics added] which prevails in a group. (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 81)

New (1998) challenges readers to "reconceptualize our role as educators" as we "seriously debate the role of schooling in our contemporary and tumultuous society" (p. 280). Following the example of the schools in Reggio Emilia, Italy, she asks us to "direct more of our effort into imagining the possibilities within our own deficit-oriented society" to create a "new culture of childhood" (p. 280). Educators may then bring to the forefront of discourse issues surrounding the quality of "spirit, material, and method of education as it operates in different types of community life" (Dewey, 1916/1966, p. 81).

Issues of Quality

The intent of this paper is to participate in New's (1998) call for new discourse by reconceptualizing the quality of a child's life in school. It examines the rationale of the *spirit, material, and method of education* behind the Project Approach, as proposed by Katz and Chard (2000). My purpose is twofold: (1) to describe some of the conditions and opportunities offered by the Project Approach that support children's dispositions to become lifelong learners, and (2) to present a model of *three avenues of engagement* for the mind of the child as it functions intellectually and socially within the contexts created (or made possible) by the Project Approach.

The Project Approach is said to engage children's minds (Katz & Chard, 2000). Children's minds become engaged in good project work as they are given opportunities to investigate in depth worthwhile interests, solve relevant problems, and represent significant findings. Through this engagement, children may show increased motivation in their efforts to learn and in so doing have opportunities to develop the dispositions to become lifelong learners. This paper discusses three avenues of engagement that project work offers children: curiosity, creativity, and communication. Through each of these potent human processes, teachers are able to tap into children's inborn dispositions to make sense of their world. Engagement becomes a natural function of the classroom milieu created through project work.

Classroom Milieu of Engagement

In the classroom milieu of the Project Approach, the teacher is able to create an environment that nurtures the intellectual capabilities of the child's mind (Katz & Chard, 2000). Her purpose becomes to facilitate a "development from within … based on natural endowments" versus "a process of overcoming natural inclination and substituting in its place habits acquired under external pressure" (Dewey, 1938/1998, p. 1).

In their discussion of classroom milieu, Ryan, Connell, and Deci (1985) posit that the "idea that quality education represents" *development from within* rather than *formation from without* corresponds to an emphasis on *intrinsic* rather than *extrinsic* motivation (p. 14). Further, this attention to the quality of the milieu of schooling is shared by a "long tradition of educational theorists" including:

> Bruner (1962), Holt (1972), Montessori (1967), and Rogers (1969), who have argued that learning is a process of discovery rather than compliance. In their view, an academic environment facilitates rather than enforces education, and offers opportunities for learning rather than prods. This tradition assumes an intrinsic motivation to learn in children, an inherent tendency toward mastery and knowledge, which needs to be nurtured and supported. (Ryan, Connell, & Deci, 1985, p. 14)

Milieu and Mind

Dewey (1934/1980) cautions us that theories such as those that distinguish intrinsic from extrinsic motivation contribute to the more modern notion of "popular psychology and much so-called scientific psychology [which] have been pretty thoroughly infected by the idea of the separateness of mind and body" (p. 262). From this assumption, many argue that "mind, soul, and spirit can exist and go through their operations without any interaction of the organism with its environment" (p. 263).

For this discussion of the mind's engagement through project work, the reader is asked to consider Dewey's notion that, rather than "an underlying substance (or independent entity) that performs the activities in question" (p. 263), the word *mind* is a verb:

> Mind is primarily a verb. It denotes all the ways in which we deal consciously and expressly with the situations in which we find ourselves.... Mind is more than consciousness, because it is the abiding even though changing background of which consciousness is the foreground. Mind changes slowly through the joint tuition of interest and circumstance. (p. 266)

With this assumption of the definition of *mind*, the child holds or displays an interest in interaction with the circumstances created in the classroom. Therefore, the quality of learning can be viewed in direct proportion to that of the milieu for *minding*.

Teachers are primarily responsible for this quality milieu. For example, motivation to learn varies with the kinds of goals that teachers emphasize. In her research on the effects of different kinds of motivational processes affecting learning, Dweck (1991) reports that when an emphasis is on learning goals, rather than performance goals, children: (1) become effort oriented, rather than ability oriented; (2) respond more magnanimously towards peers; (3) vary their strategies, with increased effort; (4) take more time, with increased recall; and (5) strengthen their disposition to learn. An emphasis on learning goals, rather than performance goals, is evidenced in the quality of project work (Katz & Chard, 2000).

Quality Matters

When addressing the question of the quality of children's life in school, it seems appropriate to focus attention on *exactly what children are asked to do*. Sitting still, listening to the teacher, answering questions, and following directions may be useful test-taking skills. However, if these activities form the majority of what children do in school, they may limit the role of the learner to that of a passive recipient of prescribed information.

Perhaps this passivity was well suited for graduates of schools in the last century charged with preparing a skilled industrial workforce. However, much more is required of today's graduates. Besides looking for graduates with high scores on individual tests of ability, employers seek motivated thinkers able to create innovative solutions to unexpected problems. Qualifications may include being skilled in asking questions, formulating hypotheses, making predictions, completing investigations, and organizing data—all while working well with others in a cooperative problem-solving group.

It follows that today's schools may better serve children by creating contexts to develop these abilities within the community life of the classroom. However, as evidenced in the recent presidential debates, the quantitative measures discussed at the beginning of this paper seem to take precedence in the discourse about schooling, especially at the administrative level. How children's time is spent in school is directly determined by those who control the allocation of school funds. In other words, time is money.

A Question of Time

Recently, during the first day of a university graduate class in community psychology, one of the professors, who is also a member of a local board of education, asked me for information about the Project Approach. The approach was adopted last spring by a new school in a low-income neighborhood in his district as a "schools-of-choice" theme. He said he wanted to address his colleagues' concerns about what children should be doing who already perform poorly (schoolwide) on standardized tests of basic skills: "They feel the children might be wasting valuable time doing projects. Shouldn't they be spending their time learning the basic skills?" (Thomas Moore, personal communication, August 23, 2000).

In addressing his question, I tried to emphasize the primacy of children's interests and their intellectual capabilities brought to the foreground through project work. I explained that it is in the *use* of basic skills that children achieve a level of mastery. I cited research (Marcon, 1992) suggesting that rigorous training in basic skills in early childhood may produce good results in the short run but may damage the disposition to achieve academically in the long run, especially among males of color.

Finally, I postulated that this result might be so because children may become bored with schooling that features a transmission model of standardized teaching and testing. I explained that it is not the intent of those who profess the implementation of the Project Approach to replace the teaching of skills with allowing children to wander aimlessly, following whatever captures their attention at the moment.

Rather, the approach is intended to capitalize on children's interests, giving them an opportunity to apply the skills they are learning while collecting and representing information on a topic worthy of their time and energy. Furthermore, perhaps as children pursue their interests while given an opportunity to formulate questions, make predictions, investigate resources, and represent findings to communicate to others what they discover, they might see the ***need to use*** the basic skills we want them to learn.

"That's enough," he said.

I noticed he had taken a half page of notes as I spoke. I began wondering how I could have better answered his question. I did not feel my response was *enough*. I began to consider the nature and importance of engagement.

Engaging Children's Minds

Terms of Engagement

According to Katz and Chard (2000), there are four categories of learning goals, all of which are important: (1) knowledge (facts and concepts), (2) skills (units of behavior), (3) dispositions (habits of mind), and (4) feelings. Schools frequently focus on the first two categories, but the latter may seldom be taken into consideration when prioritizing goals for curriculum and instruction. Perhaps this focus mirrors the values of an educational system more concerned with extrinsic than intrinsic motivation, or the life of the child's mind.

From Motivation to Engagement. Katz and Chard (2000) have titled their book *Engaging Children's Minds: The Project Approach.* School board members, administrators, and teachers considering this approach may wonder what is meant by *engagement* in this context. Engagement is a slippery concept that may be more easily recognized when in operation than when theoretically defined. In other words, we may more easily know it when we see it!

Covington (1998) expresses a similar quandary in his discussion of motivation:

> Knowing *how* to motivate people is not the same as knowing *what* motivation is.…Whatever is being aroused by the clever use of rewards and incentives—namely, motivation itself—remains mysterious and elusive. Motivation, like the concept of gravity, is easier to describe (in terms of its outward, observable effects) than it is to define. (p. 1)

Covington (1998) argues that school reform is ill served by the intensification policies of *more* hours in school, *more* homework, and *more* tests. He calls for alternative approaches to curriculum and instruction that offer an "opportunity for intrinsic goals to emerge in the course of daily work" (p. 140), so that "the act of learning is its own reward" (p. 19). It follows that when conditions favor the emergence or arousal of intrinsic motivation, however mysterious and elusive the process may be, children's minds are more likely to become engaged.

Becoming Engaged. Fried (1995) describes engagement as a necessary component of classroom dynamics for high-quality learning to occur:

> For students to *engage* is not what is usually called "time on task": responding to work-sheets, recalling facts or dates, or reading chapters of a text and answering questions at the end. I want students to engage the way the clutch on a car gets engaged: an engine can be running, making appropriate noises, burning fuel and creating exhaust fumes, but unless the clutch is engaged, nothing moves.
>
> It's all sound and smoke, and nobody gets anywhere. In too many classrooms, we see the sound and smoke of note-taking, answer-giving, homework-checking, test taking, and the forgetting that quickly follows. In the end, there is creativity and excitement for the few, compliance and endurance for most, rebellion and failure for some, but not very much work of high quality is being produced, and not much engagement of the mind and spirit takes place. (p. 46)

Engaging Interests. The state of engagement, *the condition of being in gear,* may become self-perpetuating because the child finds it satisfying. The child is said to be intrinsically motivated, as the continuation of thought or activity appears to be self-directed. When engaged, the child's mind is in a state that is ready to move in the continued pursuit of an interest.

Katz and Chard (2000) use the term *interest* to refer to "the disposition to pursue an activity or goal in the absence of coercion or expected rewards" (p. 38). They include in their definition "the tendency to become deeply absorbed enough in an activity to pursue it over an extended period of time, with sufficient commitment to accept its routine as well as novel aspects" (p. 38). This process of engagement with interest at least "in rudimentary form appears to be present in the normal human at birth" (p. 38).

However, they remind us that this inborn disposition to become engaged may be "affected by a variety of social-psychological processes throughout childhood" (Katz & Chard, 2000, p. 38). It may be lessened or developed, as a tool of the child's *minding* for learning, as a result of surrounding conditions. Abuse, neglect, or even early pressure to excel academically can damage children's dispositions to develop intellectual capabilities. The classroom teacher bears the responsibility for providing the context to support the conditions for children to become, and continue to be, engaged at school.

Feeling Engaged. In his recent book *Teaching as a Performing Art,* Sarason (1999) argues that teachers must seek to involve their children much the same way that actors endeavor to engage an audience. Regarding the salient role of the teacher in the classroom:

> The maxim that teachers teach children, not subject matter, is not a downgrading of subject matter but a way of saying that if you do not understand where children are coming from in the classroom context, the intended meaning, significance, and utility of that subject matter may not be grasped. (p. 45)

He continues by commenting that feeling is a necessary, yet often unrecognized, component in the art of teaching, as well as other performing arts. He notes that Garrison (1997) reminds his readers in *Dewey and Eros* that:

> Dewey rejects a kind of faculty psychology which leads to a conception of learning in which thinking, feeling, and desire-passion are for all practical purposes in distinct realms of the learning experience in *student and teacher*. It is not a rejection on principle but rather on the basis that *they are never separate in experience.* (p. 45)

Sarason (1999) admits that even though the word *passion* is one "we ordinarily do not associate with teaching" (p. 45), nevertheless "it was implicitly and explicitly central to Dewey's conception of learning and thinking" (p. 45). From this perspective, it seems clear that Dewey's ideas about learning from direct experience do not discount the feelings that accompany the learning situation.

Engaging Feelings. Feelings can be thought of as being inextricably mixed with thinking and learning. Children working on projects have many opportunities to experience positive feelings. These opportunities include: (1) a sense of belonging to a group engaged in purposeful work, (2) a sense of acceptance in making a meaningful contribution to the narrative discourse of the classroom, and (3) a sense of competence in developing the disposition to use their intellectual capabilities in applying and strengthening academic skills. These positive feelings help to nurture children's confidence in their intellectual abilities as they develop the disposition to become lifelong learners (Katz & Chard, 2000).

Habits of Engagement

Engaging Habits. Dispositions are considered to be habits of mind that may be nurtured, extinguished, or damaged according to how they are affected in the learning situation. Ignoring feelings that accompany the learning process may damage the disposition to learn. For example, Katz and Chard (2000) remind us that having reading skills and having the disposition to read are entirely different. Often the latter can be lost or damaged at the expense of the former through an overemphasis on drill and practice of isolated skills or meaningless content.

However, teachers can choose to recognize the importance of nurturing such dispositions as a learning goal. For example, good project work capitalizes on the natural disposition to investigate:

> All of us are born with the disposition to learn. It is the intellectual disposition to make sense of experience. The very young are natural born anthropologists and social scientists. Early childhood specialists say that children learn through play. It is just as natural to learn through observation and investigation (Katz, personal communication, September 12, 2000).

Developing Habits. Cuffaro (1995) reminds us that "while we are accustomed to thinking of *habit* as actions that are repetitive, mechanical, routine, as our dichotomized 'good' and 'bad' habits…the word as used by Dewey is the antithesis of the routinized, mechanical, and passive" (p. 18). Rather, his approach was to characterize habits as "active, assertive, insistent, dominant, immediate" (p. 19). Therefore, our habits are ways of perceiving, reacting, and thinking about what we do and what happens to us as we experience life.

According to Cuffaro (1995) the development of habits is a growth process—the capacity for plasticity that enables us to learn from experience. Within this process of trying and discovering, modifying and adapting, habits are formed and dispositions develop:

> Habits represent the selections we have made in our encounters with the environment, the choices that guide and lead our actions.... To be inclined, predisposed, speaks to the influence of prior activity, to preferences and meanings acquired over time. Habits reflect the continuity of self in time. They tell the story of our experiences and experiencing. Even when not used, habits are present in latent form in all that we do. Habits affect each other. They do not stand as discrete units of behavior or response. Habits interact and combine. They reinforce each other and interpenetrate. (Cuffaro, 1995, p. 19)

Forming Selves. For Dewey (1934/1980), as dispositions are formed and reformed through further interactions with the world, they become the formation of character as the interpenetration of developing habits form the self:

> The world we have experienced becomes an integral part of the self that acts and is acted upon in further experience. In their physical occurrence things and events experienced pass and are gone. But something of their meaning and value is retained as an integral part of self. Through habits formed in intercourse with the world, we also inhabit the world. It becomes a home and the home is part of our every experience. (p. 104)

Keeping in mind that for young children a major part of their time is spent in school, it may be prudent to consider the nature of the habits being fostered in their classrooms. What kinds of feelings are they experiencing? Are their minds becoming engaged in their work? Are they developing dispositions to become lifelong learners?

Teachers who become sensitive to these issues can use the Project Approach to create conditions that arouse positive feelings toward school and generate a context for strengthening children's dispositions to learn. Through good project work, children have opportunities to become engaged while investigating, problem solving, and representing. These kinds of activities tap into at least three potent processes that appear to be inherent aspects of human nature: curiosity, creativity, and communication. Within the context of good project work, these processes become *avenues* (means of access) *of engagement.*

Three Avenues of Engagement in the Context of Projects

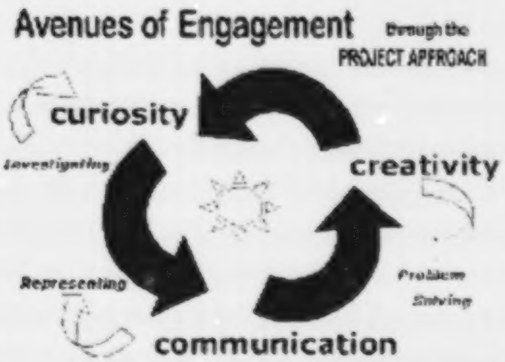
Projects as Context

Avenues in Context. The Project Approach provides a context that offers opportunities for children's minds to become engaged through three compelling characteristics of human nature—curiosity, creativity, and communication. Each avenue becomes a *means of access* to inherent aptitudes that set into motion the mysterious processes of *minding* in the continued pursuit of an interest (described above).

Katz and Chard (2000) describe projects as stories, with a beginning, middle, and end that correspond to the three phases of projects. Each phase can also be seen as corresponding to one of three main elements of project work—content, process, and product. Just as the phases overlap, and the three elements pervade each phase, the avenues of engagement also come into play throughout the course of the project. However, for simplicity in the discussion that follows, each avenue will be considered in terms of an activity salient to a corresponding phase: (1) in phase one, investigating content engages the desire to understand—curiosity; (2) in phase two, the problem-solving process engages the desire to imagine—creativity; and (3) in phase three, the representing of information in products engages the desire to share or impart one's ideas to others—communication.

Model of Context. The reader is referred to the model in the figure below. An epistemological assumption underlying the Project Approach is that a normally developing child comes into the classroom with inborn intellectual proclivities. As Greene (1995) states, "We are first cast into the world as embodied beings trying to understand" (p. 73). The radiant circle in the middle of this model of the dynamics of the process of engagement in human consciousness represents this *embodied being*.

The arrows in the outermost region of the model represent the kinds of intellectual tasks—investigating, problem solving, representing—offered to children throughout the context of project work. These intellectual capacities are variously involved as children are engaged in: (1) completing memory drawings; (2) writing and illustrating personal stories; (3) doing observational drawings and taking notes during fieldwork; (4) conducting surveys; (5) interviewing visiting experts; (6) consulting secondary resources; (7) organizing information in murals, posters, charts, pictographs, Venn Diagrams, models, or skits; and (8) preparing and sharing information as a culminating event with parents and peers.



Between the context arrows and the inner sphere of consciousness, the three wide arrows are intended to represent the three avenues (means of access) of engagement through curiosity, creativity, and communication. These represent some of the *mysterious and elusive processes* that come into play during *minding*. The arrows represent the dynamics of the interchange of forces from within (the child) and without (the environment) in an attempt to show how a child's mind (minding) may come to be engaged in the milieu of the Project Approach.

The dynamic processes and the spherical imagery suggested by the model take their origin from the almost lyrical *analysis of thinking* by Vygotsky (1987), who stated:

> Thought ... is not born of other thoughts. Thought has its origins in the motivating sphere of consciousness, a sphere that includes our inclinations and needs, our interests and impulses, and our affect and emotion. The affective and volitional tendency stands behind thought. Only here do we find the answer to the final "why" in the analysis of thinking. (p. 282)

Minding in Context. In the context of project work, the child's thinking, feeling, and acting are integrated through the dynamics of cognitive, social, and emotional interchange. As Rogoff (1990) posits, "the traditional distinction among cognitive, affective, and social processes becomes blurred once we focus on thinking as the attempt to determine intelligent means to reach goals" (p. 9). It may be reasonable to assume that children combine the use of all of these processes as they work individually and in concert to reach their respective and collective goals in project work. In the context of project work, children may become engaged through the *affective and volitional tendencies* of curiosity, creativity, and communication that *stand behind thought* in their *minding*.

Curiosity

Curiosity appears to be an innate characteristic of humans that drives the act of *minding*, necessary for survival. According to Covington and Teel (1996), curiosity expresses itself in three *manifestations* of the mind: (1) *question asking* through inquiring, probing, and speculating; (2) *sensitivity* to detecting mysterious, puzzling, and inconsistent facts or situations; and (3) *problem finding* through recognizing an unspoken need or anticipating a potential but still unnoticed danger (p. 72).

Asking Questions. As young children become more proficient in oral language, they seem to have a natural proclivity for asking questions: What is that? Can I see? Can I touch it? Why is it dark? Where are you going? This insatiable curiosity springs from an inborn desire to seek information—an internal craving that pushes humans to try to make sense of their surroundings. However, this proclivity may become latent in children who spend endless hours following directions to complete tasks deemed important by others. Even so, as a fundamental drive for the construction of understanding, curiosity does not disappear.

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Curiosity and Learning. According to Piaget (1970), when children notice something in their surroundings that doesn't fit the scheme of things as they understand them, a state of disequilibrium is generated. Piaget refers to these as *perturbing* events. This state can create a sense of uncertainty, or disequilibrium, that for most children may cause a feeling of discomfort.

According to Piaget (1970), the disequilibrium causes the child either: (1) to ignore the information that does not fit, (2) to take in a part of the information so that their understanding may be changed but distorted or incomplete, or (3) to change the existing scheme of things (accommodation) so that the new information can be understood (assimilation). Piaget was widely criticized for his linear view of this process.

In his later years, he struggled with the problem of linearity and explained that equilibrium was in a constant state of flux. To Piaget (1975/1985), the state of disequilibrium *motivates the act of seeking,* which in turn sets into motion the processes that will bring about a state of reequilibrium:

> It appears to us that in explaining cognitive development ... the concept of improving or optimizing equilibration imposes itself as fundamental. Our effort here has consisted in seeking the mechanisms of such equilibration, the problem being to take account of its two inseparable dimensions. On the one hand it involves compensation of perturbations responsible for the disequilibria that motivate seeking. On the other, it involves the construction of the new factors producing improvement. (p. 139)

From Disequilibrium to Equilibrium. It is the curiosity brought on by a state of disequilibrium that *motivates the seeking* as the child notices something that doesn't fit with the known. In the noticing, the child's mind tries to relate new information to what it already understands. It searches memories to make possible connections. The brain alerts the body to utilize the senses to gather more information. The child becomes compelled to reach out, to touch, to listen more intently, to look more closely, and even to smell or taste in order to make a better determination of the quantity and qualities of the unknown. The mind then uses the new information to compare it with existing categories—it is more like this, somewhat like that, and not like something else.

Curiosity in Projects. Project investigations include formulating and asking questions about topics of interest to the child. All this activity is driven by curiosity, which serves as an avenue of engagement for this natural engine of learning. The child's mind seeks to identify, label, categorize, classify, and bring a sense of order to experience in an effort to comprehend whatever it apprehends.

When children are given time to ponder, investigate, ask questions, and reflect, their sense of wonder can flourish, and their disposition to be curious is less likely to become latent. Furthermore, children's curiosity may be piqued if the outcomes of some tasks are not always certain (Covington, 1998). For example, when children are given the opportunity to make predictions before completing experiments or interviewing visiting experts, they become curious to see if their predictions are correct. As their inborn disposition to be curious is engaged, they are likely to experience positive feelings as their curiosities are satisfied.

When Einstein talked about curiosity, he said that it had its *own reason for being,* and when pressed for describing his genius, he added that he had no special talent, that he was only passionately curious. According to Einstein, "problem-finding is the highest form of curiosity" (Covington & Teel, 1996, p. 72). Asking questions, making predictions, or finding problems to solve require creative thinking, another avenue of engagement for children's minding in project work.

Creativity

Creative thinking is an inherent human process that can be developed when given proper guidance. Young children do not often say that they are not creative, as do most adults. Children's lack of inhibition when given opportunities to be creative may serve as evidence that the disposition to be creative can indeed be damaged. It is recognized as a universal of human nature. The disposition to be creative is manifested early in the life cycle but may not be as fully developed or appreciated across different cultures (Gardner, 1993; Torrance, 1995).

Creative Thinking. According to Torrance (1995), creative thinking is its own reward. It is usually characterized as imaginative, original, expressive, and productive. It is another of the elusive and mysterious processes of *minding*, but "becomes evident in...scientific theories, inventions, improved products, novels, poems, designs, paintings, and the like" (p. 24). It may often be best noticed in everyday life in the act of problem solving. "Whatever creativity is, it is in part a solution to a problem" (Aldiss, 1990, p. 53).

Torrance (1995) began to study creativity in schooling in 1958. Creativity became a popular item on the national education agenda when the Russians launched *Sputnik* in 1957 in hopes of increasing the chances of the United States to win the *arms race* during the cold war. But for Torrance, nurturing the development of creative thinking is important, not only to the next generation of scientists, but also to increasing: (1) mental health in children's personality development, (2) the acquisition of information, and (3) the application of knowledge to daily problems.

Creative Problem Solving. Torrance (1995) explains the dynamics of creative thinking as similar to Piaget's process of disequilibrium. He describes a feeling of dis-ease when something is noticed as lacking. This uncomfortable feeling persists as humans look around to find a solution for whatever is bothering them. It is only when an answer has been found to solve the annoying problem that *the minding* can return to a state of relative ease.

The act of problem solving becomes satisfying. Some humans seek out these kinds of situations more readily than others. They become the risk takers. Those with an abundance of problem-solving energy may find satisfaction through the creation of art. The meanings expressed become extensions of the self. May (1975) contends that the creative process is *superational*, bringing into play emotional, intellectual, and volitional functions simultaneously in high-level thinking as an expression of self-actualization. An intense absorption with, and a heightened awareness of, a problem often characterize children working on projects.

Creativity in Project Work. Torrance (1995) defines creativity as "the process of forming ideas or hypotheses, testing hypotheses, and communicating the results" (p. 23). This threefold process defines the purposes of the three phases of project work. As students begin to formulate questions, original thinking is encouraged.

In project work, children may choose what they wish to investigate and how they want to represent their findings. Both of these opportunities provide a context for children to think about and produce something of their own creation. In this context, the children's original thoughts are honored. The child's desire to communicate meanings to others through the representations of their findings can be tapped as a motivating force. Thus, communication forms another avenue of engaging their minding.

Communication

Symbol Making. The inclination to communicate appears to be an inborn characteristic of human nature. Bees are able to dance patterns that communicate to other bees in the hive where honey is located miles away, birds sing to mark their territories, and chimps can produce patterns of American Sign Language. However, only humans can create symbols to hold memories of meanings important for future reference. Children learn to use symbols to communicate to others what is meaningful to them. Meaning making, therefore, seems to lie somewhere on the border between experience and representation, where the reality of experience spills into children's representations of meaning in the symbols they create (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997).

In project work, children are encouraged to negotiate with the teacher how they are going to represent what they have learned. The teacher may ask, "How would you like to show others what you know?" The child may choose from a variety of forms of representation including murals, plays, books, dioramas, mobiles, models, flowcharts, pictographs, maps, and Venn diagrams. When a child chooses to create a representation of the information discovered through the inquiry process, it is reasonable to assume that the representation holds the meanings he or she wishes to communicate.

The Social Individual. Dewey describes the self as a social individual. Although each person is unique, that uniqueness is only realized in relation to others. Children come to understand themselves in the world through their interactions with others. When they work together with others, they realize their potential as they endeavor to communicate their needs in relation to their strengths.

In traditional classrooms, children usually work in isolation from others. They are sometimes chastised for coming to the aid of their classmates. Teachers have a hard time keeping children from communicating with their peers while they are completing assignments. Often observers will notice that the children seem to have their own agenda of socializing. At times they will pursue this agenda quietly while maintaining an eye on the teacher as she pursues her own agenda. Observers hear teachers asking, "Are you working or talking? Did I give you permission to talk?" Sometimes children will persist in their social agenda, even under threat of banishment to a time-out corner!

Kagan (1997) advises teachers to use this interest in communication to foster collaborative work environments in the classroom. The research on the effectiveness of cooperative learning processes in the acquisition of knowledge and the creation of new learning abounds (Kagan, 1997; Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1994; Sarason, 1990). When teachers use cooperative learning structures in concert with the Project Approach, learning can increase exponentially.

Communication in Project Work. The Project Approach offers a context in which children can work together in small groups to complete their investigations and representations. In this context, the children's and the teacher's agendas may converge. Children may disagree, but they have a vested interest in working out solutions to their problems. Their work becomes purposeful as they collaborate toward a common goal. If the teacher has to intervene, it may be to help them identify options and explore the pros and cons of various alternatives. In this way, the teacher is able to harness the desire to socialize, together with the motivation to form a meaningful product, through collaboration.

This meaningful interaction is known as *child cross talk*. The children have many opportunities to share their ideas as they work together and then to share what the group has created with the rest of the class. During the course of the project, as children complete a significant piece of their investigations or representations, the teacher might ask them to share their work in progress. This sharing gives them an opportunity to teach the other children what they have learned in their small group and receive feedback on the accuracy and clarity of their work. Not only do the children have an opportunity to rehearse what they are thinking about, but this process also offers a context for learning how to give and receive constructive criticism.

In the final phase of the project, children gather what is most salient to their new understandings to produce a display for parents and peers outside the classroom. In the process, students are given an opportunity to self-assess what is worthy of sharing. From the many opportunities they have had to listen to other children present their work in progress, they are able to explain other children's work to their parents. The culminating event gives children, parents, and others an opportunity to participate in increasing the quality of the community life of the group.

Conclusion

Through this discussion, I have tried to show how the Project Approach can contribute to the development of positive dispositions and feelings in children. In harnessing the potential of inborn tendencies to be curious, creative, and communicative, teachers can create a context for children to have positive experiences in purposeful thinking as they become engaged in project work in school.

When law makers, administrators, and teachers come together to make decisions about how children's time is to be spent in school, perhaps they will take into consideration the (nonstandardized) nature of children. Perhaps they will consider questions of quality as well as quantity. Perhaps they will consider how important children's feelings are to developing good mental health and will adopt a mind-set toward creating environments that foster intellectual, as well as academic, capabilities. As Dewey reminded us, the purpose of education is to develop in each child the dispositions necessary to become a lifelong learner.

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Children's Self-Assessment

Betty J. Liebovich

Abstract

Through children's self-assessment, teachers and parents have the opportunity to clarify what the children see as their strengths in learning, whether the learning goals that teachers and parents set for a child are shared by the child, and what skills the child feels he or she needs to improve. This paper examines how young children's self-assessment is positively influenced by the experience of engaging in project learning. Children ages 3 to 5 years who were enrolled in a preschool housed in a midwestern university whose curriculum was based on the Project Approach were interviewed to determine whether they would self-assess, how they self-assess, and to what degree they might self-assess. While the children appeared to effectively engage in self-assessment in the classroom context, in the after-school interviews, the children initially showed little evidence of engaging in self-assessment or supporting their responses with standards and criteria while self-assessing. After the interview design was changed—pairing the children and offering Legos to manipulate during the interview—the children were more willing to respond in depth. Data indicated that the children might have responded more comfortably in the context of the classroom during typical class routines rather than in formal interviews held after school.

This paper examines how young children's self-assessment is positively influenced by the experience of engaging in project learning. Assessment, according to Hills (1992), "involves the multiple steps of collecting data on a child's development and learning, determining its significance in light of the program goals and objectives, incorporating the information into planning for individuals and programs, and communicating the findings to parents and other involved parties" (p. 43). Self-assessment, in this paper, is defined as thoughtful consideration of project work completed by preschool children.

The purpose of having children engage in self-assessment is to help them determine what they think is their most gratifying and well-done work and what goals they set for themselves and for evaluation purposes. When self-assessing, children use criteria and standards to evaluate their work. In *Engaging Children's Minds*, Katz and Chard (2000) write that "teachers can help children to adopt criteria or develop rubrics for evaluating their efforts by encouraging them to think about whether the work is as *clear, detailed, accurate,* or as *complete* as it could be..." (p. 17). A child engaging in self-assessment gives a teacher and parents the opportunity to clarify for themselves what the child articulates as his or her strengths in learning, to determine whether the learning goals that teachers and parents set for a child are shared by the child, and to determine what skills the child thinks he or she needs to improve. The adults may compare the child's responses with what they have targeted.

To some, this approach to assessment may seem an unlikely one for teachers and children to attempt. Children in the U.S. school system have not traditionally been socialized to discuss their work with teachers, parents, or peers, or to critically examine what they learn. Typically, children's work is evaluated by teachers or parents as good/bad and right/wrong. However, self-assessment may be a useful alternative for evaluating children's academic progress and setting educational goals.

Standardized assessments primarily focus on the teacher as evaluator and the child as the performer. Few, if any, alternatives to standardized tests directly involve the student in the process of assessment. The child's work may be collected and preserved in a portfolio. Written observations by an adult, typically the teacher, may also become part of the overall academic assessment. Checklists with or without accompanying comments are also considered an alternative assessment approach. But none of these strategies allows for the child's input or permits the child the option of becoming involved in the educational goal setting or evaluation of the learning process.

Self-assessment allows the child and teacher to become partners in the learning process and gives both the opportunity to develop goals for the individual child. By encouraging a child to critically analyze her or his learning process, the child is afforded the opportunity to take control of his or her learning and creates an arena for independence and ownership of the learning process.

The age at which children begin to be capable of effectively engaging in self-assessment is undetermined. Stipek (1984) ascertained that "three and four year old children were quite capable of processing the past performance information and of applying that information in their judgements about future performance" (p. 161). Guice and Johnston (1995) indicated in their research that responses from the third-grade children they interviewed showed the most thoughtful self-assessment as compared to the other age groups they interviewed. Hillyer and Ley (1996) interviewed second-grade children and found that they were effective in their self-assessment techniques. Research has shown success in self-assessment with children from 3 years old to third grade. While some researchers confidently report specific ages at which children engage in self-assessment, there is no consensus about the age at which children can truly begin to effectively engage in self-assessment.

Determining whether a child effectively engages in self-assessment involves subjective evaluation of a child's responses to questions about his or her work while self-assessing. Interviewing a child is one approach to discovering whether a child effectively engages in self-assessment. The teacher can take the role of interviewer, asking the children key questions to stimulate thought and consideration about the child's work in school (Guice & Johnston, 1995; Hillyer & Ley, 1996). Children responding to questions relating directly to their work is a first step toward effective self-assessment. Does the child respond confidently? Are the responses to the questions thoughtful? Does the child give details about her or his work when probed further? Will the child give specific examples of work when asked to clarify? These questions encourage the children to interpret their experiences, think critically and deeply about their work, and offer support for their responses.

Methods

Participants

The 3- to 5-year-old children who participated in this study are enrolled in a preschool program sponsored and housed in a major midwestern university. Of the 25 children and families enrolled in the preschool classroom, 20 families gave written permission to interview their children. Of the 20 children whose families gave permission for their child to participate, 11 were male and 9 were female; three boys were 3 years old, four boys were 4 years old, and four boys were 5 years old; four girls were 3 years old and five girls were 4 years old. Three children are bilingual, with English being their second language. Only one of the three children uses English fluently. Of the 20 children who returned consent forms to be interviewed, 13 were interviewed. Due to time constraints, scheduling conflicts, and language skill levels, I was not able to interview all 20 children for whom I had permission.

The children attend the preschool five days a week from 8:30 a.m. until noon. The curriculum method used in this classroom is the Project Approach. The children are encouraged to guide much of their own learning through questioning their environment on specific topics and finding answers to those questions. The teachers facilitate the children's learning process by helping them form questions, assisting the children in gathering information and materials to answer the questions, and then offering the children opportunities to create concrete representations of their findings.

I am one of the children's teachers in the preschool classroom, and all of the children interviewed have been in the classroom since September of 1999. Some of the children have been enrolled in the same classroom since September 1998 and have had me as one of their teachers for their entire experience with the preschool. The children and I are very familiar with each other within the context of the classroom environment.

As part of the learning process, adults ask the children questions to help the children articulate their findings and to help the teachers determine where the children will want to go with their learning and investigations. The questions asked of the children require that they think deeply about their work and that they offer explanations about their thought processes while engaged in their work. Very often, the children are asked to discern whether a concrete representation is complete and explain why it is complete or what needs to be done to the representation to make it complete. The learning process in the Project Approach also includes peers questioning each other's representations and offering suggestions for improving or elaborating on particular points of the embodiment of the investigation.

Interview Procedures

One of the stipulations in gaining access to the children in this preschool was that the children be interviewed after class ended for the day. I made individual arrangements with each family to interview the children at noon, upon dismissal of the entire group of preschoolers. The children who were interviewed stayed with me in the classroom and were re-joined with their families at the conclusion of the interview.

A second stipulation in gaining access to the children was that the interviews be conducted in the room used for dramatic play during class sessions. The classroom area is divided into three separate rooms, each offering distinct experiences for the children. One room houses computers and puzzles so that the children may work quietly, alone or in small groups. Another larger room, which is situated between the computer room and the dramatic play room, is where a large proportion of the children spend most of their time. The dramatic play room is positioned furthest from the door that the children and families use to enter and exit the classroom. Because of the flow of traffic at dismissal time, the dramatic play room offered the most quiet atmosphere for conducting interviews.

Each child was approached for the interview, and I requested verbal permission from the child prior to entering the dramatic play room where the interview would be conducted. With the child's affirmative response to the invitation, I explained to the child what would transpire before, during, and after the interview: (1) the interchange would be tape recorded, (2) I would be asking questions about the children's experiences in school, and (3) the child's responses would be written down later for the interviewer to use in a class at the university and for a paper for the class.

Initially, the interviews were conducted one on one with me. The child sat in a chair at a low table with me sitting across from the child. Each child was asked the following three questions (or a close variation) during the interview: (1) What do you do best in school? (or What do you do well in school?), (2) What do you think you could do better in school? and (3) What do you need help with in school?

The first three interviews were only audiotaped. After procuring a camcorder, I videotaped and audiotaped the rest of the interviews. The children who were interviewed individually reacted similarly to those who were only audiotaped. The questions were answered simply, and the children sat rigidly in their chairs or fidgeted while sitting in their chairs. The data collected were minimally more useful than those collected with the children only being audiotaped. The children were accustomed to having interchanges with their friends and peers in the classroom, and being interviewed alone, by their teacher, was unfamiliar and disconcerting to them.

After reviewing the data, I changed the interview setting. The children were interviewed in pairs, at the same time, and were encouraged to interact with each other and to play with Legos prior to the interview taking place. The children eagerly engaged with the Legos and, as they played, asked questions about the equipment I set up. The children were not concerned about the camcorder or the audiotape being next to or in front of them as they played. Most children ignored the presence of the machinery during the interview.

Analysis

To What Extent Will Children Self-Assess?

The children initially showed little depth in the responses given to the questions about their work at school. The responses to the questions posed were direct and simplistic. Answers were limited to "yes," "no," "uh huh," or bodily gestures such as a shoulder shrug or a head nod. When the children were asked to elaborate and encouraged to give details to explain their answers, they either did not respond or changed the subject to something unrelated to the discussion. An example of this behavior occurred in an interview with a 3-year-old girl who was audiotaped only. She said that painting is what she did best in school:

I: When you paint, what is it that you do best?
C: Color.
I: The color is best? Tell me more about the color being the best.
C: Because I can use things to draw with.
I: You can use things to draw with? What is it that you draw?
C: ...m...(shrugs shoulders)
I: (Writes down what is being said.)
C: (Looks at the notebook in front of the interviewer.) Those are a lot of words.
I: Yeah. I'm drawing out the words. You tell me what you do, and I write down the words.
C: (Nods her head.)
I: So you say you paint the best. Is there something in particular that you paint that you feel is the best?
C: No.

This child emphatically answered that when she paints, color is her best work, but she would not engage in a conversation investigating the answer more deeply. The interviewer allowed the girl to stray from the topic of painting to talk about the note-taking, but the child would not be re-directed to discuss her work in painting. There was a painting by the child on the wall in the room where the interview took place, and the child noticed the painting, commented that it was her painting but refused to discuss the painting when asked about color being the best part of her painting. Even though this child was able to tell me what she thought was her best work, she would not describe why it was her best work or what standards led her to the criterion of painting being her best work.

Another child, a 4-year-old boy, explained that basketball was his best work in school. While this is not necessarily the type of work to which the interviewer was referring, the child did explain in a little more detail *why* he felt that basketball was his best work:

I: Basketball. Tell me a little bit more about what is best about basketball?
W: I get good shots.
I: What is a good shot?
W: That means when you get a good hoop.
I: A good hoop? Tell me a little more about that. A good shot would mean that...
W: Like...like this. (Demonstrates what a good shot is by using hands and imaginary ball in a hole in the middle of the Lego table.) Umm...if I, if I wanted to make a ball go into here...
I: umm...hmm...(agreement)
W: And I would go like...(whooshing noise). And it went in there (indicating the hole in the Lego table).
I: Okay...so you're looking for the ball to go into the hoop?
W: Uhh huh...(agreement)
I: And you do that pretty frequently?
W: YES...(quick and emphatic)
I: What would be a bad shot?
W: Not getting it in the hoop.
I: Not getting it in the hoop.
W: Like this (whooshing noise and hand gestures to indicate what a bad shot would be).

This child was very clear about basketball being his best work. While it is not a part of the curriculum in the classroom, it is part of the outdoor experience during a typical preschool day. This child defined what a "good shot" and a "bad shot" would be, which indicates that he has a clear idea of standards and criterion for shooting baskets in basketball.

R., a 5-year-old boy, was able to identify and articulate what his best work was in school, but he could not define what made it his best work. He did not attempt to change the subject or avoid discussing his best work. He just would not elaborate on the standards or criterion of what was his best work:

I: Of all those things you mentioned: rug toys, blocks, Legos, computers—of all those things, what is your best work at school?
R: Legos.
I: The Legos is your best work. And why do you say it is your best?
R: Because I usually don't know how to do other structures.
I: Oh...tell me more about that. When you build a Lego structure and it is your best...what do you think is your best work? Why is it your best work?
R: mmm...mmmm....I don't know.
I: Do you have a Lego structure that you decided to keep?...instead of taking it apart and putting it back in the box?
R: mmm...(shakes his head "no").

There was a Lego structure that R. had created and left on the Lego table right next to him. The interviewer referred to it later in the interview, but R. did not choose to give details leading to standards and criteria for the work he had produced.

In an interview with two boys, a 5-year-old and a 4-year-old who were friends, the 5-year-old was very explicit in answering probing questions about what was his best work. These two are friends outside of school, ride together to and from preschool, and prefer engaging in activities together when offered the choice to do so. Of the two, the 5-year-old is the leader, but the 4-year-old was very willing to answer questions I posed. The 5-year-old gave wonderful detail about his best work in school:

I: E., you were telling me last week about puzzles and that you're really good at puzzles. Do you still feel that way?
E: Yeah.
I: Why is it that you're good at puzzles?
E: Well, because I practiced a lot, and my grandma is an expert at puzzles. She's *so* good at puzzles.
I: Is she?
E: Yeah.
I: And what makes her so good at puzzles?
E: Well, she's practiced since she was young, I think.

E. was very confident in his own abilities with puzzles as he compared his skills to an expert, his grandmother. He was also very clear about how she became an expert—she had been doing puzzles since she was young. E. expressed his criterion, being good at puzzles, and his standards, his grandmother is an expert so he looks to her as a role model of what a puzzle expert is like and how she became an expert.

These children have had a great deal of experience with questions from adults about their work in the classroom. The children are often asked to explain their work to peers and ask for ideas for adding or changing what they have done, whether it is a handwritten book or a structure created from scrap materials. However, some of the children interviewed were hesitant to answer questions and elaborate on their responses, while others explained in detail what their criteria and standards were.

Does Age Affect the Children's Responses?

Age seemed to have a little impact on the responses received. The 4-year-old children followed the flow of the interview and were less likely to steer the conversation away from the questions posed. The children who were 4 and 5 years old and were in the preschool for their second year were more likely to be at ease and respond more completely during the interview than those who were 3 years old or were in the preschool for the first time. Even though the older and more experienced children stayed on task during the interview, the format of the interview appeared to have more impact on the fluidity and expansiveness of their responses than did their age.

Triangulating the Data: What Do the Parents Predict?

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to attend parent/teacher conferences with some of the families whose children participated in the interviews. The parents were briefed on the research I conducted, the purpose of the study, the interview setting, and the questions posed to their children. I asked the parents to predict what their child's response would be to the three questions leading the children in self-assessment: What is your best work at school? What work, if any, could you do better in school? and What, if anything, do you need help with at school? Many parents accurately predicted what their child's responses were.

The parents of E., a 5-year-old boy who identified puzzles as his best work, had not considered puzzles his best work. They had predicted that E. would say his best work was in pattern blocks, numbers, or using scissors. When learning of E.'s response about puzzles, they were not surprised. They immediately mentioned the grandmother who E. had identified as the puzzle expert against whom he rated himself and his expertise. When I asked the parents to predict what E. thought he could do better in school, the parents identified spelling, reading, and physical activities. E., however, identified his computer skills as something he could do better and explained that he sometimes has difficulty "getting out of a game," which he further clarified as meaning that he had trouble remembering the sequence of where to click the mouse to leave one function in order to enter another function. His parents were not surprised by this assessment and cited examples that E. had spoken of outside of class with them explaining his challenges with the computer.

The parents of a 4-year-old girl, J., who is completing her second year with me as one of her teachers, and who was interviewed simultaneously with her friend, accurately predicted J.'s assessment of her best work, but they were not on target about J.'s assessment of what she thought she could do better or what she thought she needed help with. J. said that dramatic play and stories were her best work, and her parents agreed. The parents explained to me how J.'s interest in dramatic play has always been strong and has become more complex, a comment that I understood and heartily agreed with. I explained the response J. gave me and told her parents how J. felt that she was especially good at puppet shows because she could make them scary, but not enough to make her peers stay away from her shows. Her parents predicted that J. would say she could do blocks better because she rarely chose them when given the opportunity for free play in the classroom or at home. However, J. felt that her problem-solving skills could be better and cited an incident in which she and her friend (with whom she was interviewed) were asked to leave their best work, dramatic play, because they were fighting and hurting each other instead of talking and solving problems. The parents remembered this incident vividly and finished the story before I concluded.

Results and Discussion

While the children had engaged in self-assessment in the classroom context during class hours, the initial interview method of determining whether they could self-assess provided little evidence of their abilities. Two 4-year-old boys, familiar with the classroom procedures of responding to queries about their work, did not show evidence of their experiences during the interview process. They were interviewed individually but were in the room together as the interviews were conducted. The boys each sat in a chair at a table opposite me for the interview. Responses were monosyllabic ("uh huh," "nope," and "yes"), simple, and took great effort on my part to elicit. The boys were hesitant to elaborate on their answers to the three questions posed about their schoolwork, often shrugging their shoulders or dropping their heads to avert their eyes and not answer. The children did not seem bothered by the presence of the camera or the tape recorder, but gave very quick and uncomplicated responses to the questions posed. The children were nervous during the interview process and changing the approach calmed the children so that they could respond more willingly and comfortably. The children interviewed subsequently responded better to interviews in which they engaged in play (Legos) and in which they were interviewed in pairs instead of one on one with the interviewer.

During the interviews that were audiotaped, the children sat rigidly in their chairs and hesitantly answered the questions I posed. The tape recorder is a small, hand-held device placed on the table between the child and me. Each child who was only audiotaped handled the recorder as it was engaged and kept his or her eyes either on me or the recorder.

The interviews took from 5 to 7 minutes for each child, and the interchange was stilted and appeared uncomfortable for the children.

Perhaps a better approach to gathering richer data would be to interview the children while they are engaged in activities during the class session. While this approach was not an option for this study, the approach may be available to others who wish to pursue this investigation. Children seem to respond most completely and confidently when they are comfortable and have a sense of control. When they are in the classroom, immersed in activities of their choice, they have a sense of control allowing them to relax and respond more naturally when asked questions. Also, when a child has work that he or she has produced in sight or available for reference, the child may respond more completely to questions posed. A concrete example may prompt more discussion and allow the child to physically point out what work is best and why, what work could be better and why, and with what the child needs help and why. The abstractness of having only mental recall may be too complex for the child. The concrete example gives the child an opportunity to jog the memory and point to examples rather than rely on memory alone.

Aside from the environment affecting the self-assessment process during this study, the children's routine was altered to accommodate the parameters of the stipulations for this project. The children were accustomed to gathering their belongings at dismissal time and going outdoors to meet someone who would pick them up. I altered that routine at the end of the school day and asked the children to self-assess when they were ready to move on to the next part of their day. It appeared that the children were tired and perhaps ready to shift into something different from the school routine, and I was asking them to postpone the shift that they were ready to make.

I had the advantage of working with these children in the classroom context for most of an academic year and some of them for almost two academic years. The children whom I interviewed were familiar with me, my style of interacting with them, and the environment in which they were interviewed. Even though some of the children were very tentative, at best, about participating in an interview, they trusted me enough to engage in a question-and-answer interchange. When analyzing the data I collected, I found that the personalities of each child showed in each interview, and some conclusions I made were based on my previous experiences with these children. Once I understood the challenges the interviews posed, namely the context and comfort level of the children, I could quickly make changes in the interview style and context to encourage more deeply considered responses from the children. Had I been in an unfamiliar setting and tried to interview children who were strangers to me, I believe the process would have been much more challenging than it was.

The age of the children seemed to have little effect on the responses they gave to the questions posed. While E., a 3-year-old girl, shrugged her shoulders and avoided answering questions, J., a 3-year-old boy, was very confident about his best work and articulated his thoughts during the interview. Both of these children are finishing their first year with the preschool but responded very differently to the interview questions. E., a 5-year-old boy, eagerly explained his success with puzzles, while R., another 5-year-old boy, was reluctant to answer questions posed and was very nervous about the procedure. E. is finishing his first year with the preschool, while R. is finishing his second year. Although the 4- and 5-year-old children might be expected to answer interview questions more completely and confidently, age appeared to have less impact than the context of the interview and the style in which the interview was conducted.

Children at the preschool level definitely engage in self-assessment, whether it be in a formal adult/child interchange or among themselves during classroom activities. This research project indicated that the environment and context in which children self-assess has as much to do with the depth and thought of the responses as the questions posed to evoke responses. As one of their teachers, I see the children self-assess spontaneously, daily, and effortlessly. As they sit in a group at a table and compare their modeling dough creations or discuss a structure being built in the block area, the children often confer as to what needs to happen next for improvement or modification. Their rich interchanges lead to modifications and adjustments that satisfy their vision of what is good work. Once the children were removed from the routine of the classroom day and placed in a familiar room with an unfamiliar routine, they were less comfortable self-assessing and did not respond as they do in the classroom context. This study would do well to be repeated in the context of the children's typical day in the classroom, while engaged in familiar activities with the children they choose to interact with. Although I tried to put the children at ease by pairing them with a friend for the interview, they appeared uncomfortable with the interview process and offered less detailed self-assessment than what I had seen in the classroom. Perhaps capturing the children spontaneously self-assessing while engaging in classroom routines would offer richer responses and data for analysis.

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The Project Approach as a Way of Making Life Meaningful in the Classroom

Eunju Yun

Abstract

This paper discusses why the Project Approach is important in early childhood education. The paper explores the intellectual and social benefits of the Project Approach and then discusses project work from a Deweyan perspective, as well as its relationship to the Reggio Emilia approach, constructivism, and the project method discussed by Kilpatrick early in the 20th century.

This paper discusses the importance of project work in the early childhood curriculum. The "why" of the Project Approach rather than the "what" and "how"—although they may be equally important—is the focus of this paper. The significance of project work in the curriculum may be not just intellectual but, more importantly, it may be related to dispositional development. Sustained engagement in project work, it seems, should dispose children toward the *habit* of meaningful pursuits as an element of the good life. In other words, project work may epitomize the Deweyan dictum that education itself should be characterized by meaningfulness and not merely preparation for life in the future.

Intellectual Aspects of Project Work

According to Katz and Chard (1989, p. 5), project work need not be all of the curriculum. Project work complements play, on the one hand, and academic learning, on the other. It is more formal than play in the earlier part of early childhood and more informal than systematic instruction in the later part of early childhood (Katz, 1994).

The Project Approach is *intellectual*—neither just playful nor merely academic (Katz & Chard, 1989, p. 4). Even very young children—whose business seems mostly to play—may well be up to intellectual learning, although systematic academic instruction may not yet be "appropriate" for them. They could perhaps be taught reading and writing, but in the course of academic instruction, their *disposition* toward later literate activities could be damaged (Katz, 1995, p. 64), perhaps beyond repair:

> For example, the risk of early instruction in beginning reading skills is that the amount of drill and practice required for success at an early age seems to undermine children's disposition to be readers. It is clearly not useful for a child to learn skills if, in the process of acquiring them, the disposition to use them is lost. In the case of reading in particular, comprehension is most likely to be dependent on actual reading and not just on skill-based reading instruction. (Katz, 1999, p. 2)

Conventional reading and writing are not the only media of communication for children; younger children could well think and express their understanding through *graphic languages* and thus be intellectual, not merely playful. Again, according to Katz:

> The Reggio Emilia children's work suggested to me that many of us in the U.S. seriously underestimate preprimary school children's *graphical* [italics added] representational capabilities and the quality of *intellectual* [italics added] effort and growth it can stimulate. (Katz, 1993, pp. 20-21)

Children can exercise such intellectual virtues as creativity, critical thinking, and finer discrimination without recourse to conventional written language.

It goes without saying, of course, that if children in the earlier phase of early childhood should focus on intellectual activities, so should children in the later phase as well. However, the intellectual development of children in later years could be neglected for different reasons from those in the earlier phase. With older children, the curriculum could overemphasize systematic instruction, while with younger children, it could overemphasize spontaneous play. Academic work, as well as play, are best thought of as being enhanced by intellectual work.

Project work could also provide a context for the application of skills learned in systematic instruction (Katz & Chard, 1989, p. 11; Chard, 2000). Through project work, children in the later phase of early childhood could practice and strengthen their burgeoning skills of counting, measuring, reading, writing, and drawing as these skills are used to represent their ideas, theories, and findings related to the project topic.

Still another justification for project work, in relation to intellectual development, is the idea of curriculum integration (Katz & Chard, 1989, p. 6; Katz, 1994), which could be easily neglected in systematic instruction. In project work, the study of a topic could be approached from many different subject perspectives. The same understanding could be dramatized or expressed in drawings, songs, constructions, and so forth. The "web" of subtopics might also illustrate this dimension of project work.

Social Aspects of Project Work

Another rationale for the introduction of project work into early childhood education may be the development of a "community ethos" (Katz & Chard, 1989, p. 6). The benefits of project work may be social as well as intellectual:

> The classroom is a place where people can live a fulfilling life together as a community of learners if needs and concerns are appropriately expressed. Problems can be discussed. Support, encouragement, and models can be provided by both teacher and peers. Where expectations for children's learning are high it is important that the social interaction itself is designed to facilitate learning. (Chard, 2000)

The Project Approach may provide a natural context for this spirit of community, which systematic instruction could neglect or work against. During project work, "many processes and skills useful for participation in a democracy are applied: resolving conflicts, sharing responsibility for carrying out plans, making suggestions to one another, and so forth" (Katz & Chard, 1998).

Project Work as Meaningful Life

However, the benefits of project work may not just be intellectual and social. The importance of the Project Approach may be found as well in its significance as a practice of *living*. A project resembles a "real-life" situation more than play or systematic instruction does. A project may be a self-initiated *work* activity, and active cooperative participation, at the same time as being a *learning* activity. Not only could the project itself be meaningful but also a *practice* of—not merely a preparation for—that fulfilling life. Project work could be seen, in other words, as ontological or existential as well as intellectual or social. Ontological in the sense that an overarching attitude of living is at stake with the Project Approach, not merely a regional development of the intellect or the social, and existential in the sense that an authentic mode of being is strengthened through project work. The intellectual or the social could in effect be aspects of the existential or ontological.

Katz and Chard (1989, p. 6) seem to emphasize, in a Deweyan spirit, this existential dimension of the Project Approach this way: "The children's school experiences are real, daily life experiences; they are not a withdrawal from life, which is resumed only outside the school." Their life in the school, then, would have to approximate the fulfilling life of meaningfulness as far as possible; the children should be able to experience their work as meaningful. Project work may be particularly significant in this context. Through project work, children can not only improve their "understanding of the world around them" but also can "strengthen their dispositions to go on learning" for the rest of their lives (Katz & Chard, 1989, p. 5).

The Project Approach could thus be understood as emphasizing the educational philosophy of self-realization, as in Fenstermacher's classification of educational philosophies—that is, the "executive" (managerial or technical efficiency), the "liberationist" (generalist understanding), and the "therapist" (self-realization) (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 1986). The therapist emphasis seems to be essentially on learning *as living*, while the other two seem to be on learning of knowledge, technical or general, *for living*.

It seems that we do not have a sense of the existential in our historical understanding of educational theories. Rousseau, for example, might not have been concerned just with the meaningfulness of knowledge or thinking critically or creatively, in his emphasis on the concept of "nature." His concern might primarily have been with the inner life of children—of course, life according to their own nature and not in terms of comparing their own achievement to that of others. This seems what he means by *integral* life as opposed to the fractional one. Rousseau's education according to nature should thus be primarily existential or ontological rather than epistemological.

Dewey's use of the term "experience" is similarly ontological in meaning rather than epistemological. He does not seem primarily to emphasize the process of knowing versus knowledge as a product; he seems rather to emphasize the very process of living called learning. Learning was of course to be based on the experience of the child at a given time. But, in addition, he believed emphatically that learning itself should be a process of meaningful life or experience for learners. Knowledge acquisition should be dependent on this living. Learning is to be a practice of life, not merely for its preparation in terms of knowledge acquisition. Teachers were to be attentive, first of all, to the qualities of living called learning, according to Dewey. Interest, thinking, morals, creativity, etc., were primarily qualities of any good life, rather than merely conditions of knowing or its fruits.

Recent postmodern philosophies, such as phenomenology, hermeneutics, and existentialism, seem also to prioritize the ontological over the epistemological. They are "overcoming epistemology," (Taylor, 1995, chapter 1) or "post-epistemological" (Noddings, 1990, p. 7), so to speak. They emphasize situated or contextual understanding over disengaged or objective knowing. What is primary is "intention," "meaning," "embodiment," "engagement," "prejudgments," and "traditions"—i.e., "life-world."

The historical "project method" and the modern practices of the "Reggio Emilia approach" and "constructivist education" seem to share existential prioritization of the importance of the actual experiences provided by the Project Approach.

The Project Approach and Reggio Emilia

The Project Approach is similar to the Reggio Emilia approach in many respects, especially in its emphasis on project work in the cooperative context. Children's learning in Reggio Emilia is itself a meaningful life rather than mere learning activities. The children's project work around the "supermarket" (Katz, 1993) or the "poppies" drawing (Forman, 1993, pp. 144-145), for example, seems to embody real-life experiences full of meaning compared with typical schoolwork isolated from ordinary life. It may be because project work in Reggio Emilia is designed "to help very young make deeper and fuller sense of events and phenomena in their own environment and experience that are worthy of their attention" (Katz, 1993, p. 20). Their project work seems rather ontological, not merely epistemological.

We could assume that Reggio Emilia project topics based on "everyday objects and events are uninteresting. However, the work of preprimary schoolers in Reggio Emilia indicates that the processes of 'unpacking' or defamiliarizing everyday objects and events can be deeply meaningful and interesting to them" (Katz, 1993, p. 23). If the project topic is "exotic and outside of the children's direct experience," children would be "dependent upon the teacher for most of the questions, ideas, information, thinking, and planning" (Katz, 1993, p. 23).

Their activity could in this case be mere school learning. When the topic is familiar, however, children's participation would be more active and lively. Their life experience would be fuller and deeper.

The Project Approach and Constructivism

According to Forman (1993, p. 151), Katz and Chard's Project Approach could be taken to be constructive. But, for him, it would be a qualified constructivism because the Project Approach is not specific about children's "*endogenous*" (Forman, 1993, p. 138) construction of knowledge, although relying on their emerging interests. Constructivism, however, like the Project Approach, could be interpreted as a matter of life rather than epistemology.

Most of the constructivists in early childhood education seem oriented more epistemologically than ontologically (Forman, 1993; Kamii, 1991). But at a more philosophical level, constructivism could be ontological rather than epistemological. According to constructivism, our knowledge or understanding is not a context-free universal discovery; rather, it may inescapably be a context-specific situated construction, based on and for the context of experience or *living* (Rorty, 1989; von Glasersfeld, 1996). Knowledge may be from and for life; life may take precedence over knowledge here. Moreover, knowing is itself an important form of life for human beings, according to constructivism. Math and science are mathematiz*ing* and scienc*ing* at the same time, as human practices. It seems that learning in constructivism, as in the Project Approach, is itself actual life for children.

The Project Approach and the Project Method

According to Kilpatrick's well-known "project method," a project is characterized by whole-hearted purposefulness in a social context. For Kilpatrick, this purposefulness is among the most important components of a meaningful life. As he argues early in his famous paper "The Project Method," "the whole remaining discussion is but to support the contention here argued in advance, that education based on the purposeful act prepares best for life, while at the same time it constitutes the present worthy life itself" (Kilpatrick, 1918, p. 323). His ultimate justification of the project method seems to be predicated on the enhancement of life, not just on the meaningfulness of knowing something. Today's Project Approach may not be much different from the earlier project method in this respect.

Conclusion

This paper focused on the importance of project work in early childhood curriculum. The aspect of project work as a practice of *meaningful life* was especially singled out for emphasis, although the introduction of the Project Approach could well be justified for its intellectual emphasis and social ethos, among other benefits. The Reggio Emilia approach, constructivist education, and Kilpatrick's project method were taken to be similar to the Project Approach in this respect.

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School Change

New Perspectives on Theory-to-Practice: Implications for Transforming Teacher Education and Child Outcomes

Karen VanderVen

Abstract

Noting the importance of the relationship between theory and practice to the quality of early childhood education, this paper deals with two issues: (1) translating available empirical and theoretical knowledge into effective practice, and (2) what Lilian Katz's work, collectively, would then indicate for a model of teacher and caregiver preparation that would yield the best possible practitioners. The paper points out that to transform teacher preparation, certain streams of thought can be considered as a way to "reconceptualize" the theory-to-practice issue in a way that can serve to generate a conceptual schema for framing Lilian Katz's far-ranging work in early childhood education into a new, transformational model for teacher preparation. Among the notions to be considered are a reciprocal process for integrating theory and practice, the concept of the "mental model," hermeneutics in developmental work, and nonlinear dynamical systems theory. The paper then discusses the "Katzian Early Childhood Teacher Preparation System," including guiding principles, goals, curriculum, delivery, professional development, indirect practice, and faculty characteristics.

"Let's call a one-year moratorium on dinosaurs." Lilian Katz

"As a nation, we're simply not taking advantage of how much we have learned about early development over the past 40 years." This statement by Jack Shonkoff, chair of the committee formed by the National Academies (2000) and produced by the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (http://nationalacademics.org/), along with the increasing body of compelling evidence that proper preparation of early childhood teachers and caregivers is directly related to positive developmental outcomes for children (e.g., *Children at the Center*, 1979; Buell, 1999), pose a profound challenge to early child education today.

This challenge is to take what we already *know* about what promotes positive and healthy development and ensure that it is applied in direct practice. We all know this—all we have to do is to review the observations we make daily in various early childhood programs. Despite the wealth of research on child development and developmental practice, and the books and journals full of descriptions of prototypes of marvelous programs, the fact remains that at "point of service" (while there are certainly exceptions) early childhood programs in general are of poor quality. Since well-prepared practitioners are related to positive outcomes, the challenge is to *prepare* a knowledgeable and competent direct workforce of teachers, caregivers, and child development specialists, along with "indirect" practitioners: advocates, directors, administrators, trainers, educators, and researchers (VanderVen, 1994), who collectively can create a system of better quality direct practice.

Now a major 20th-century contributor to early childhood theory, research, and practice, Professor Lilian Katz, is being honored for a lifetime of contribution to early childhood education. Given the challenge described above, is there a way we can look at her work to see what it tells us about how to address the challenge? On the premise that the answer is "yes," this paper will deal with the two issues at hand: (1) translating available empirical and theoretical knowledge into *effective* practice, and (2) what Lilian Katz's work, collectively, would then indicate for a model of teacher and caregiver preparation that would yield the best possible practitioners.

Thus, this paper will propose (1) a new way to conceptualize the "theory-to-practice" issue; and, applying it, (2) present the model to be called the "Katzian Early Childhood Teacher Preparation System" (following Katz herself, the term "teacher" will be used to refer to a variety of practitioner titles—e.g., child care worker, developmentalist, caregiver).

To aid in the construction of the framework for the proposed model, an attempt was made to access all extant written work of Lilian Katz; a compilation of the pieces found is in the reference list. These works were reviewed with an eye to identifying salient themes in each work and synthesizing "meta-themes" across works. (By definition, this activity was reductionistic: when attempting to summarize an extensive and varied body of work, subtleties inevitably are omitted. The author takes complete responsibility for errors of omission and acknowledges that the methodology itself is subject to the pitfalls that accrue when "theory is translated into practice.")

The Theory and Practice Issue

That there is a "breach" between theory and practice in the child-caring fields has continually been acknowledged (e.g., VanderVen, 1993). Students can spend hours taking "courses," yet when confronted with direct practice situations, they are unable to apply their "learning" into changed practices. Similarly, staff can sit through numerous "inservice" training experiences and continue the same uninformed practices that the training sessions were supposed to modify. If early childhood teacher preparation (for purposes of this paper defined as including primarily formal education) is to improve practice, then we need to rethink or, to use the words of those also espousing a transformed look at early childhood education, "reconceptualize" it (e.g., Kessler & Swadener, 1992). Such a reconceptualization needs to be transformational rather than additive; that is, to look at core values, content, delivery structures, and the like, rather than simply adding more to the current system. A transformed way of providing teacher preparation must be developed if collectively the early childhood workforce is going to be successful in promoting positive developmental outcomes for children by translating theoretical and empirical knowledge into changed practice.

To initiate this process, certain streams of thought can be considered as a way to "reconceptualize" the theory-to-practice issue in a way that can serve to generate a conceptual schema for framing Lilian Katz's far-ranging work in early childhood education into a new, transformational model for teacher preparation. Among the notions to be considered are a reciprocal, rather than either-or, process for viewing theory and practice (VanderVen, 1993); the concept of the "mental model" (Senge, 1990; VanderVen, 2000); hermeneutics in developmental work (Nakkula & Ravitch, 1998); and nonlinear dynamical systems theory (e.g., Eoyang, 1997; Goerner, 1994; VanderVen, 1998, 2000).

The Reciprocal Process for Integrating Theory and Practice

A reciprocal, multistep process for integrating theory and practice that embraces a top-down process in which grand theories and synthesized theories are translated into practice and a bottom-up process in which experience and practice are conceptualized into grand theory has implications for designing training and education programs that would be very different from the coursework of universities and the workshops of inservice training providers. The reciprocity would be embraced by encouraging practitioners to review and conceptualize their experience into larger theories, while simultaneously mastering existent theories, deducing practice implications from them, trying them out, and then revising them in an ongoing interactive process. For this integrated activity to occur, there would need to be concomitant integrated components of education and practice.

Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics, which deals with interpretation (Nakkula & Ravitch, 1998), is an extensive and complicated subject. However, hermeneutics can provde insight into the relationship between theory, research, and practice. In applied developmental work, the practitioner enters the "hermeneutic circle" in which, striving to uncover the meaning of both others' actions and one's own actions in relation to others', the boundaries between what is "theory," "research," and "practice" become blended, as both parties continue on the path of mutual uncovering and understanding that leads to further growth.

In this sense, according to the hermeneuticists, "theory and practice are the same." This notion may be puzzling to those who are used to thinking of theory and practice as dichotomous, unattached concepts. The notion of the mental model, to be discussed momentarily, may resolve the issue: If one considers that actual practice is driven or determined by the practitioner's mental model, then theory and practice actually become integrated in that mental model.

Mental Model

A "mental model," described in Senge's groundbreaking work on transforming organizations into "learning organizations" (1990), is the "internal, coherent frame of reference we use to represent our worldview, to integrate our experiences and to draw upon for problem solving and decision making" (VanderVen, 2000, p. 121). Mental models can range from the simplistic to the more complex, with complexity better enabling the person to understand both subtle and systemic factors operating in a situation. It would seem that the mental model is the internal determining factor of what actually gets implemented in practice and determines the practitioner's response. Given the relevance of effective early childhood practice to these abilities, it would seem that the more complex an early childhood practitioner's mental model is, the more sound his or her practice would be because it would better resonate with the reality and needs of a particular situation. Thus, it would seem that if teacher preparation in early childhood education were designed in a way to develop complex mental models in practitioners, then these would provide an internal working concept of integrated theory and practice.

Nonlinear Dynamical Systems Theory

Nonlinear dynamical systems theory embraces chaos theory and complexity theory. In general, these theories, which recently have been utilized as a "lens" for viewing early childhood issues (e.g., VanderVen, 1998), deal with unpredictability, nonlinearity, and the interconnectedness of and among systems (Goerner, 1994). One concept in nonlinear dynamical systems theory is that of the fractal: an iterative and self-similar process in which forms repeat themselves from a micro to macro level (Eoyang, 1997). Applied to an organization, a "fractal" organization would have a thread of coherence running through every structure from the smallest to the largest, so that all actions were aligned towards a common goal or mission. This key concept will be the pivotal point for reconceptualizing teacher preparation in a Lilian Katz framework.

Perhaps in advance of her time, Lilian Katz thought in terms of nonlinear dynamical systems theory, when she referred to the "feed forward" phenomenon in teacher preparation (Katz, 1984b). The issue posed is that students are exposed to content that prepares them for eventualities that they have not yet experienced. As early as 1977, Katz stated: "There are many complex mixtures and dynamics in the causes of behavior. We safeguard the quality of children's experiences when we do justice to these complexities" (p. 104). Katz also considers recursion, feedback from the outcomes of a system back into the same system which produces new outcomes. Recursion effects contribute to the practitioner's mental model of practice.

There are several implications of nonlinear dynamical systems theory for teacher education. First of all, teachers, along with those in related professions such as social work, need to understand general systems theory. Very basically this means that they understand that the phenomena they deal with are systemic—multiply determined, interactive, and interconnected—to state it very simply. Similarly, teachers need to recognize how effective educational experiences might be seen as delivered in a more integrated or circular fashion, with different experiences occurring simultaneously as well as in the more traditional sequential way.

Summarizing these concepts into a transformed notion of theory and practice to "situate" a model for teacher preparation is a challenge. This model would incorporate theoretical, empirical, and practical knowledge into a structured yet dynamic and evolving delivery system that would have structures for enabling practitioners to develop more complex mental models by reflecting on their practice in order to connect direct experience with theoretical constructs. The fractal concept suggests that teacher preparation activities and what teachers are expected to do in practice should be, in general, aligned. In line with the overall systemic conceptual approach embracing hermeneutics and nonlinear dynamical systems theory, none of the concepts related to reconceptualizing theory and practice is independent of the other; rather they are overlapping processes that collectively set forth guiding principles for a teacher preparation system. When these are applied to the themes of Lilian Katz's work, it seems appropriate to consider the resultant proposal: a "Katzian Early Childhood Teacher Preparation System." It should be pointed out that that Professor Katz has already made a major and substantive contribution to early childhood teacher education (e.g., 1984a, 1984b, 1984c, 1996, 1997a, 1997b). What is being done here then *extends* the power of this work by connecting it to theory-practice reframing and integrating it into her work on dealing specifically with children.

Integrating Theory and Practice: The "Katzian Early Childhood Teacher Preparation System"

Certainly, based on Katz's implicit understanding of nonlinear dynamic systems, a Katzian teacher preparation activity would be systemic. Hence, we will refer to our proposals as a "teacher preparation system." Included in it will be "guiding principles," or an underlying philosophy; goals; the curriculum, both content and paracurricular aspects; delivery structures; professional development; indirect practice; and faculty characteristics.

Guiding Principles

- The linchpin of the system is Katz's own notion, the *Principle of Congruity*: "the way we teach teachers should be congruent in many basic aspects—but not all—with the way we want them to teach children" (1977, p. 57). This principle is "derived from two presuppositions." One is that we serve as a model for both adult and child students; the other is that there are generic teaching principles applicable to learners of all ages. Katz points out that the congruity is or should not be completely identical; rather there would be a "consistency, harmony, or concordance between the way we teach teachers and the way we want them to teach" (p. 58). This notion in terms of contemporary chaos and complexity theory would then bring a fractal quality, or *coherence*, to teacher preparation. I would hereby propose that this *alignment* would—by both implicitly and explicitly creating an internal working model of practice, with an understanding of contextual factors—improve practice.
- There would be both "cores" and "threads" in the curriculum; that is, there would be formal content or "cores" in specific courses or curricular delivery units, but also there would be "threads" reflecting the values associated with the content across the organized curriculum components (e.g., child development theory would be a core, but a critical perspective on that theory would be a thread running through all the curriculum).
- There would be a major component of fieldwork, although the precise model that would be most effective is yet unknown (Katz, 1984b). To actualize the integration of theory and practice through reciprocal theory and mental model building, there would be courses, discussions provided specifically to focus on the relationships emerging between students' informational knowledge and practice activities.
- Activities would be dialectic; that is, embrace two dichotomous perspectives as dimensions on a continuum rather than one over the other. For example, skills-oriented art instruction and free, expressive art would both be seen as more likely to enhance children's creativity than either one of them alone.
- Source knowledge would include "child development theory" taught in a critical way so that learners would recognize that "working knowledge" of theory provides a conceptual framework for one's mental model of practice.
- While studying about children can be enjoyable, it should be considered *serious*—in intent, content, and delivery.

- There would be continuing education and other models to support any time-limited educational effort to support the ongoing professional development of practitioners into more complex practice and into other roles in practice.

- "Knowledge, skills, dispositions, and feelings" (Katz & Chard, 1990, p. 49) would all be entrained in a comprehensive curriculum that would acknowledge the significance of the social construction of knowledge.

Goals

Like any curriculum, there would be goals in the Katzian Early Childhood Teacher Preparation System. Broadly stated, and taken from Katz herself, these could be for adults as they would be for children: (1) acquisition of knowledge, (2) acquisition of skills, (3) development of dispositions, and (4) development of feelings conveyed in a way that reflects both the continuity to adult development from childhood and the greater experience and mental complexity of adults (Katz, 1997a, p. 16; Katz & Chard, 1990).

Curriculum

Curriculum usually is described in terms of content to be conveyed and the processes by which that is done.

Content (Knowledge)

Discipline knowledge. A strong theme in Katz's writings is the need for children to receive systematic instruction (along with other forms), to do work that is taken seriously, to be exposed to formal content. While wishing to avoid a quantum leap, these themes would suggest that at the crux of the Katzian Early Childhood Teacher Preparation System would be a strong liberal education in disciplines of the arts, humanities, social sciences, and physical sciences.

Child development (both "normative" and "dynamic") concerned with normative ranges, change, cumulative effects, and long-term impacts (accompanied by critical thinking). Katz (1996) discusses sensibly the role of child development theory: that while some of the criticism of it as the basis for practice (e.g., Kessler & Swadener, 1992) may have credence, it still obviously has a great deal to offer as long as one remains aware of the issues.

Ethics and ethical principles. Resolving ethical dilemmas and the like would be both a "core" and a "thread": it would be taught as a content area, while an ethical context would inform all educational experiences.

Social development and group process. The relationship of social development to cognitive development and the power of the group if properly used to promote developmental goals and enhance learning is stressed by Katz in various writings—for example, *Fostering Children's Social Competence* (Katz & McClellan, 1997). Teachers would experience these processes in a context that fostered ongoing development of the same social skills in themselves.

Planning and program design. The notion of planning and design of program crosses Katz's writings; such content would certainly be included in the teacher preparation curriculum with actual practice in program design, application, and evaluation.

Skills (Teaching Strategies)

In her writings, Katz describes a number of specific strategies. The effective curriculum would certainly identify these and provide opportunity for supervised application of them *in situ.* Skill in specific curricular areas for children (e.g., art, drama, music) would also be promoted.

Dispositions

A strong early child program fosters dispositions or "habits of mind," as Katz (Katz & McClellan, 1997) has called them, for learning in children. An effective teacher preparation program would cultivate dispositions as well. Such qualities, crucial to the notion of ongoing professional development into greater complexity, could include curiosity, workmanship, creativity, and reflectivity.

Feelings

Perhaps feelings is one area in which there would be the least congruence between what is done with children and what is done with adults. Learning to be sensitive to children's feelings of course is crucial in early childhood teacher education, but there needs to be consideration as to how far feeling states openly move into the more formal educational process. In this area, perhaps Katz's principle of "optimal distance" would apply. Certainly there would be some sensitivity to and accommodation of individual situations. Faculty roles similarly would address the issue; an advisor would be a more appropriate person to deal with feelings and heavily affective situations than might be a "content" centered professor. Nondidactic instructional strategies such as simulations and role plays could be a suitable way to "teach" about children's feelings while maintaining "optimal distance" between students and faculty. Following Katz's contention that relationships are best when centered around content, ensuring that this principle is embodied in the curriculum can help to focus appropriate expression of adult feelings as connected to the realities of the learning situation at hand.

Process

A curriculum includes not only the content but also processes that situate how the content is taught and how both content and processes together support the curricular goals.

"Enabling" and prescribed curriculum. Curriculum would both be "enabling"—that is, open ended to allow flexibility and participation in its shaping by learners as well as teachers, especially as learning increased over time—and substantive.

Multiple forms of investigation. These would include observation (not necessarily at the outset of a preparation program), empirical research methods and applications (Katz frequently calls for empirical testing of premises she has proposed), and qualitative approaches to learning (for example, learning through using art media).

Systematic instruction/Rigorous content and constructivist learning. This premise is adapted from Katz's concept of "realistic and imaginative representation" for children (Katz, 1993). Content would not be seen as constrictive, or an "either-or" barrier to open expression, but rather as an enhancer—rigor, even including some memorization, specific knowledge of theories and concepts, and the like would be included with the recognition that requiring such an approach to content does not prevent more informal constructivist and representational activities.

Assessment governed by moderate inspiration. A precursor of the insight from the "self-esteem" movement that meaningless praise does not improve either one's feelings about oneself or one's performance, moderate inspiration as described by Katz (1979) suggests providing encouragement and inspiration specific to work performed rather than in a global or undifferentiated way. This view of assessment could suggest that in a Katzian model of teacher preparation, there would be no grade inflation. Rather, an assessment system would be designed based on specific outcomes, performance standards for attaining them, and multiple ways of demonstrating proficiency in them.

Extended family model. A community of learners who "shared responsibility, intimacy, informality, and participation" (Katz, 1993, p. 33) would be cultivated in a way that focused around topics to be learned about and tasks to be completed, to maintain "optimum distance" between the faculty and the student—much better done around shared interests than in a vacuum.

Delivery

The Professional Development School model. This model (e.g., Larkin, 2000) would be ideal to reflect a Katzian model of teacher preparation. A Professional Development School is an equal partnership between an academic institution and direct service program(s) in the community.

Multiple teaching methods. There would be multiple methods of instruction utilized, ranging from teacher (faculty) directed, focusing on specific knowledge and skills to be acquired, to student guided.

Project Approach. The Project Approach, as conceived as a pedagogy for children (Katz & Chard, 1990, 1996, 1998), is eminently applicable to adult learners and encourages the application of knowledge and skills more systematically acquired. Students together, and students and faculty, would engage in developing projects related to identified intellectual and learning goals. Project work would be an ideal way again of applying a major Katz tenet: that there should be *content* in relationships and that such content enhances the quality of that relationship. The shared inquiry would enable multiple perspectives to be integrated into everybody's evolving mental models.

Grouping. In the Katzian model, there would be great emphasis on grouping of learners, beyond those who just happened to sign up for a course and are sitting in rows of desks. Student bodies would be diverse and could incorporate "mixed-age grouping" (Katz, 1995) at the adult level. To enable such assemblages of student bodies, target marketing could be utilized in student recruitment, and financial and other support could be provided to nontraditional college-age learners. Intergenerational learning teams could be particularly powerful, pairing senior learners with younger ones in class activities, project work teams, and the like.

Paracurriculum/Professional Development

Professional development. The notion of ongoing professional development of learners and practitioners would be central in the Katzian Early Childhood Teacher Preparation System. Katz (1977) has proposed stages of post-education teacher development (survival, consolidation, renewal, maturity) with a focus on how training (as differentiated from formal educational preparation) might support the teachers in each stage. In the model of preservice education proposed in this paper, there would be consideration of similar stages of teacher development in design and delivery of the curriculum.

The continued focus would be ways to "modify teachers' concepts" so that they continue to develop "understanding that is more appropriate, more accurate, deeper, and more finely differentiated than previously" (Katz, 1979, p. 2).

Professional socialization. In line with the phase evolution of teachers is the need for professionalization into role. It has been frequently observed that younger or less mature practitioners, less differentiated from their own parents and from adult authority, espouse in practice identifications that do not maintain the "optimal distance" that Katz recommends between children and teachers. A conceptual model to enhance understanding of this dynamic could be her comparison of the roles of mothers and the roles of teachers (Katz, 1980).

Critical thinking. A crucial disposition in the Katzian Early Childhood Teacher Preparation System would be critical thinking so that teachers both in preparation and in practice would continuously look at the learning and work in terms of critical factors. For example, the empirical and theoretical sources of the child development theory that probably should undergird practice need to be viewed in terms of their historical origins and different meanings and implications across contexts.

Continued education. One of the very strongest themes in Katz's writings taken as a whole (not surprisingly, of course) is that of ongoing development in which the individual grows and changes over time. For example, her stages of teacher development suggest that the "best" or "optimal" education would not end when the student departs with a certificate or diploma. The "feed forward" situation in which preservice teachers are prepared for situations they have not yet encountered is also a rationale for developing a system of ongoing "continued" education. "Continued" education would consist of formal and informal means of being exposed to new information, interacting with other colleagues, including mentors, and utilizing a variety of learning sources to extend one's knowledge and skills. These would certainly contribute to increasing the complexity of practitioners' "mental models" and their development of professional "maturity." Following a nonlinear approach, and the concept of recursion, "maturity" could occur at the upper point of one phase of development related to a certain kind of professional function. Then the individual would enter a new state of practice requiring adjustment and perhaps further preparation—and then be in the "survival" stage. Again the practitioner would work her or his way up to "maturity" in this function, and the process would continue, iteratively, throughout a lifetime career.

"Indirect" Practice

Formal preparation of professionals to serve in "indirect" roles, such as supervisors, directors, administrators, advocates, trainers, and educators (of other adults) would be a major aspect of the Katzian

Early Childhood Teacher Preparation System and would make the system multi-leveled and indeed "systemic." Included would be:

Interpretive skills. Very much in the hermeneutic tradition, Katz "interprets" the function of the *pedagogical leader*—which would be that of a faculty member in this proposed system—as serving as an *interpreter* of the field to others (Katz, 1997b). This position requires being able to speak in the "languages" of various constituencies and includes understanding and connected interaction between researchers and practitioners.

Futurism. Futurism would embrace awareness of the rapid changes in society and the fact that children and families in the future may not only be more diverse than they are now and hold different goals for the outcomes of development but also may require very different kinds of attributes in order to adapt successfully.

Planning. Planning could be taught through the execution of projects, with an approach reflective of the "webbing" used in project planning with young children. Such strategies allow joint participation in the planning.

Dispositions. To be "inventive" (Katz, 1979), to continue learning because everything can't be taught at once, the learner needs to be capable of self-directed learning over time. This disposition would be particularly important for the indirect practitioner and leader.

Socialization skills. Because indirect practitioners serve to instruct, guide, and socialize the next wave of direct practitioners into the field and into increased professional growth, skills appropriate to facilitate such socialization would be included.

Communication skills. An interesting aspect of Lilian Katz's work is that she has adapted her evolving conceptual framework to common issues, as indicated by her pieces written for parents on practical issues in child rearing such as adoption, fighting, separation, and gender (e.g., Katz, 1986a, 1986b, 1986c; 1987a, 1987b). These articles condense her lifetime of professional wisdom into practice principles that are clear and applicable by the nonprofessional reader. For any child care professional to extend the scope of influence of his or her work, communication skills—and the ability to translate theory into practice—are crucial.

Faculty

Key of course in any professional or "early childhood teacher development system" is the issue of who will be the instructional staff (faculty). Faculty with primary roles for instructing students, especially in practice, would have an extensive and preferably ongoing involvement with *direct practice.* Yet, in a dialectic way, this involvement should not be at the expense of their identification with and production of *serious scholarship.* This view is in alignment with Katz's contention that American early childhood education would be enhanced by encouraging the stance of Reggio Emilia that it is important that learners know what their teachers "stand for." Such teachers would embrace and communicate professional issues that deeply engaged them to their students. Serious scholarship, of course, could be the scholarship of practice that follows the reciprocal model of theory-practice and practice-theory.

Conclusion

In the beginning of this paper, I offered a direct quote from Lilian Katz that she made, as I recall, perhaps not as well as the quote itself, in a presentation given in Pittsburgh at an annual conference of the Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children. This conference took place in the midst of the absolute craze for dinosaurs reflected on television, in toys, and in every preschool classroom in the land. Lilian said, "Let's call a one-year moratorium on dinosaurs." I remember thinking, "My—that's *it*! This statement just makes such good sense!"

In sum, there are continued themes that have surfaced in this paper and in my mind as I prepared it: There are few, if any, scholars in early childhood whose work is so grounded in a theoretical and empirical knowledge base, yet in a way that is critical and sensitive to change and contextual factors. And yet, simply getting down to it makes such eminent good—not common—sense. It also offers promise to address the fundamental issue brought up at the beginning: the knowledge we currently hold about what contributes to positive child development must be put into radically improved practice through more effective teacher preparation.

Acknowledgments

This paper is dedicated to Dr. Lilian Katz with both respect—for her extraordinary contribution to theory and practice of early childhood education--and apology—for those inevitable distortions and omissions that occur when attempting to synthesize and codify a large and complex body of work.

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What Happened After: Professional Development as a Catalyst for Program Change

Shareen Abramson

Abstract

Exposure to the Reggio Emilia approach has led to greater awareness among early childhood educators of the importance of the arts, project work, and documentation. To be successful in integrating visual arts, teachers need to acquire the knowledge and skills for working with the arts and experience a wide range of art materials, methods, and processes guided by those expert in arts education. This paper discusses some of the principles of the Reggio Emilia approach and then describes professional development opportunities available at an early education center whose curriculum was influenced by the Reggio Emilia approach. These opportunities include the Hundred Languages of Children exhibition, the "Making Connections to Reggio Emilia and Beyond" educational institute, and observation of a model early childhood program. The paper then describes a three-day professional development institute intended to help teachers develop more background in the arts and projects through interactive sessions with artists.

Exposure to the Reggio Emilia approach has led to greater awareness among early childhood educators of the importance of the arts, project work, and documentation (Katz & Chard, 2000; Taunton & Colbert, 2000). While recognizing the benefits of developing children's social, intellectual, and creative competencies, many early childhood educators are unsure as to how to initiate and sustain a project or what makes a good project (Katz & Chard, 2000). To be successful in integrating visual arts, teachers need to acquire the knowledge and skills for working with the arts and experience a wide range of art materials, methods, and processes—guided by those expert in arts education (Taunton & Colbert, 2000). However, educators often receive little, if any, training in project work, documentation, and art methods and materials for project development, or in integrated curriculum that can help them begin a change process in their programs.

Professional development in the integration of visual arts and project work is well suited for the active learning approach familiar to early childhood educators (Piscitelli, 2000). According to Piscitelli, active learning projects for adults should include sufficient time to discover ideas, solve problems, and create projects, as well as adequate resources. Projects should also encourage both active engagement and reflective thought, and they should challenge participants to think beyond the current knowledge base.

Hundred Languages of Children Exhibition

A sublime example of the power of children's project work to foster educational change on an international level is the Hundred Languages of Children exhibition (HLC exhibition). The HLC exhibition was organized in the early 1980s by the schools in Reggio Emilia to promote the study of their educational methods as well as to reveal the enormous potential of young children for learning and creativity.

The HLC exhibition includes children's project work and documentation around themes or investigations such as "Shadowiness," "Color in Our Hands," "Harvesting Grapes with the Farmers," and "Rain in the City." In projects that may last from a week to several months, children—

individually, in pairs, or in small groups—are shown actively engaged in exploring a topic or problem and seeking to represent their understandings in different media. Children draw, work in clay, construct in wire, paint a mural, or perform a shadow or puppet play as part of their investigations. The HLC exhibition has traveled all over the world, deeply affecting those who have encountered the work of these schools in promoting children's learning and creativity.

In Fall 1998, the HLC exhibition was on display in the Joyce M. Huggins Early Education Center (Huggins Center), California State University, Fresno. More than 4,000 visitors saw the HLC exhibition. In conjunction with the exhibition, a professional development program was offered: "Making Connections to Reggio Emilia and Beyond: An Educational Institute." Dr. Lilian Katz was one of the featured instructors for the institute and taught the weekend course "Engaging Children's Minds: The Project Approach."

In addition, those attending the exhibition and institute were able to observe a model early childhood education program in the Joyce M. Huggins Center that serves mainly low-income student parents by providing services to 180 infant-toddler, preschool, and school-age children. The center has a state-of-the-art facility and an exemplary curriculum influenced by study of the Reggio Emilia approach. A key to the success of the center is the presence of an artist as part of the teaching team. The center provides an ideal setting for observation, training, demonstration, and research for university students, other students, and educators interested in learning about the best methods for early childhood education. The center has been the recipient of numerous grants and awards for its innovative program. Viewing the classrooms in the Huggins Center illustrated in a concrete way how ideas from Reggio Emilia can transform early childhood education practices in an American setting, providing a starting point for newcomers to this approach.

Expressive Arts and Documentation

According to educators in Reggio Emilia, the arts—painting, drawing, music, dance, drama, clay, paper, puppetry, etc.—are like "a hundred languages," affording multiple paths for symbolic thinking, learning, and communicating ideas (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998). Through creative expression, the enormous potential for development present in every child can be fully realized. Malaguzzi (1998) believes that "creativity should not be considered a separate mental faculty but a characteristic of our way of thinking, knowing, and making choices" (p. 75).

Recognizing the invaluable contribution of the arts to education, schools in Reggio Emilia include an "atelier," or studio classroom, and an "atelierista," or artist, on staff. In Reggio Emilia, the artist assists the children and teachers in becoming well versed in the arts and media and in creating documentation (Vecchi, 1998).

Documentation is a visual account of learning, often involving student project work, that is installed in the classroom or school. It consists of a formal, systematic, selective presentation that may include observational notes, photographs, audiotapes, video, and the actual products of children's work (Rinaldi, 1998). Documentation serves as an individual and collective "memory" of activities, a method for reflecting on learning that leads to new experiences, a way of sharing learning with others (Vecchi, 1998). Because documentation is public, it can be accessed equally and discussed by all, including those who are in the school daily—teachers, parents, children—as well as others on whom the school depends for support—community members, business leaders, and politicians. Documentation is recognized as a unique contribution by Reggio Emilia to early childhood education (Katz & Chard, 1996).

Hundred Languages for Learning

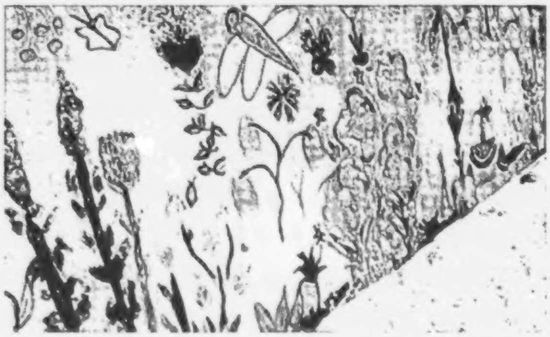
"A Hundred Languages for Learning: The Expressive Arts in Early Childhood Education" was a follow-up to the HLC exhibition and institute that examined the role of the arts in education. This three-day professional development institute sponsored by the Huggins Center was designed for educators in varied settings, including preschools, kindergartens, and primary grade and elementary classrooms. Each participant at the institute received a packet of materials containing the institute program guide, session handouts, list of Web sites on the arts and on

Reggio Emilia, and the bibliography "Selected Resources about the Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood Education." The institute "revisited" the principles and practices from the preschools of Reggio Emilia, Italy, in order to extend this multisymbolic learning approach into the schools and classrooms of participants. The institute was intended to help teachers develop more background in the arts and projects through interactive sessions with artists.[1]

During the institute, participants worked directly with more than 25 artists to learn techniques with clay, paint, photography, dance, music, drama, puppetry, papermaking, collage, and other media. Integration of the arts into the curriculum, use of materials and media to represent understandings within the context of a long-term project, and use of documentation strategies were emphasized.

Institute sessions in the arts encourage participants to explore identity and transformation.

At the beginning of the institute, participants were asked to brainstorm a topic that could be researched during the institute and offer a focus for their creative explorations in different art forms. Participants were then divided into small groups of between 8 to 15 persons to discuss possibilities. The topic suggestions from the small groups were then brought before the large group for more discussion and debate. As a result of this process, "growth and change" emerged as a topic that could be researched individually, within the small groups, and by the total institute. The phases of a project as described by Katz and Chard—planning, investigation, and conclusion—were presented in relation to the design of the institute.



Participants learn drawing and painting techniques while creating large-scale murals on growth and change that progress to completion over the three days of the institute.

The small groups continued to meet throughout the institute to reflect on their experiences in the various sessions, to think about growth and change in relation to these experiences, to discuss their questions, to plan investigations, and to relate new learning to their classroom curriculum. A place for displaying creative work and wall space for sharing reflections and comments were made available. The small groups also worked on a collaborative performance representing what they had learned about growth and change and on a concluding event for the institute. These ongoing small group sessions brought wholeness, continuity, and a sense of purpose to the institute that is often lacking in a conference format.

Following the initial discussion, a collaborative music-making event facilitated by the musical group "Cerro Negro" was held. The entire group of institute participants experimented with percussive rhythms using household objects (water bottles, cans, sticks, etc.) to create a musical prologue for the institute.

At the midpoint of the institute, another large, outdoor event, which was open to the public, was held that included simultaneous outdoor performances by various artists.

In the final afternoon of the institute, the small groups each gave a presentation/interpretation of growth and change, lasting 5 to 10 minutes, that combined all that

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Simultaneous, interactive performances by the artists held outdoors on a large grassy area invite participants to experience the arts from a different perspective.

was learned in the various art forms of dance, music, drama, and visual arts. The conclusion to the institute that evolved over the course of the program was a lively procession of participants marching across the university campus announcing their newly developed talents.

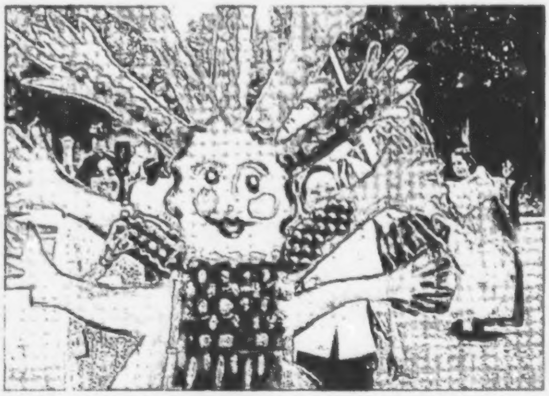
As the institute enters the final phase, the small groups work on and then stage performances combining movement, music, poetry, stories, and imaginative creations to capture the process of growth and change and its implications for work with children.

Conclusion

The institute encouraged teachers to develop a greater command of the "Hundred Languages." As educators in Reggio Emilia are eager to point out, when we begin to view the child as a powerful learner, we must also alter our conception of teachers and other adults:

> When we in Reggio say children have 100 languages, we mean more than the 100 languages of children, we mean the 100 languages of adults, of teachers. The teacher must have the capacity for many different roles. The teacher has to be the author of a play.... Teachers also need to be the main actors in the play, the protagonists.... Teachers need to be set designers who create the environment in which activities take place. At the same time, the teacher needs to be the audience who applauds. (Malaguzzi, 1994, p. 60)

Institute participants came to realize the value of nurturing their own creative capacities—for professional as well as personal growth. One hopes the institute participants will continue to seek out training and partnerships with artists in an effort to further their own creative development and foster children's deeper learning.



The institute concludes with a magnificent, colorful processional of all the participants announcing their newly developed talents as they walk across the campus.

Note

[1] An 8-minute video, "The Expressive Arts in Early Childhood Education: A Professional Development Institute," is available from the author.

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“Clouds Come from New Hampshire”: Confronting the Challenge of Philosophical Change in Early Childhood Programs[1]

Ellen P. Dodge, Barbara N. Dulik, & Jon A. Kulhanek

Abstract

This paper describes the evolution of an early childhood education program from one that was teacher directed, traditionally structured, and academically oriented to one that was emergent and child centered. The paper discusses how philosophical consensus was established, needed changes were prioritized and implemented, and new ways of thinking were presented to the traditionally trained faculty and to some change-resistant parents.

> *The way you activate the seeds of change is by making choices about the results you want to create. When you make a choice, you mobilize vast human energies and resources which otherwise go untapped.... If you limit your choices only to what seems possible or reasonable, you disconnect yourself from what you truly want, and all that is left is a compromise.* (Robert Fritz)[2]

Few things in life have such a power to immobilize, energize, divide, or unite, as does the process of change. The ease and comfort that can come from doing something because “that’s how it has always been done” is undeniable. However, for a growing number of early childhood educators, this perceived comfort is being replaced with a sense of boredom, obsolescence, and feebleness. No longer are the traditional teaching practices involving academics, units, and themes seen as the best ways to reach and empower the children with whom we work. Instead, an approach that values the emergent ideas, cultures, and creativity of young children is being embraced by a growing number of teachers as the best practice in the early childhood classroom.

While much has been published or proclaimed regarding these new and innovative approaches to early education, traditional nursery school practices do remain alive and well, in part due to the fact that many of our colleges and universities continue to reinforce these traditional methods in their teacher education programs. Also, the expectations of parents place an additional burden on the early childhood teacher to provide a program that will shape a child capable of reciting facts and constructing “refrigerator art” but often unable to negotiate the day-to-day challenges of solving problems and independent, critical, and creative thinking. However, the fact remains that methods do evolve. Certainly, our medical practices have advanced beyond the earliest procedures. Just as certain 16th-century surgical routines have given way to superior 21st-century techniques, so too should our work with young children evolve as we gain greater understanding of the ways in which children learn.

Our school began such a process of change three years ago, although truth be told the process had really been in motion for years before that. As the quote by Robert Fritz intimates, our journey has not been without its support and opposition, and it has, at times, taken tremendous stretches in our own thinking as well as a little compromising. Through it all, the willingness to pick ourselves up, remain flexible, and hold a goal in mind has kept the process in motion. Here is our story.

A Process of Change Unfolds: The Program

> *The great thing in this world is not so much where we are, but in what direction we are moving.* (Oliver Wendell Holmes)

It was a rainy day in September. The previous night a very loud and brilliant thunderstorm had blown into northern California. It was possibly the fiercest storm to hit the area in the lifetime of our young children. As we met together on the morning following the storm, the excitement level was high, and individual experiences were related with unbridled enthusiasm! The children shared with each other and the teachers their understanding of what had happened the previous night. Many presumptions were tossed about, some embraced and some discarded. An outside observer would have heard that:

- The lightning is in a bolt, and then the thunder is booming after.
- Clouds make rain, and wind makes the clouds move.
- Sometimes lightning comes and sometimes not. And the rain always keeps the flowers growing.
- Clouds are made from fluff, and fluff is made from feathers.
- God lives in the clouds, and the moon lives in the clouds, too!
- Sometimes, if you throw water up to the sun, it goes into the clouds and then it rains.
- My mommy told me that if the noise doesn't come for a while that means it is far, far away.
- I think the lightning comes from the moon and makes it really loud and bright.
- *I know that the clouds come from New Hampshire.*

For the next few weeks, a revolving group of children in the classroom was engaged in various, self-directed explorations of storms and clouds. Later, as we met to discuss the work of the children, we took time to revisit questions we had asked ourselves many times: How did we get to the place at which we could stop and *really* listen to the children? Why did we value this capability as an essential part of our program? Yet the most important question we revisited that day was: Where did we come from, and where are we going next?

A Traditional, Teacher-Directed Environment

> *The American ideal, after all, is that everyone should be as much alike as possible.* (James Baldwin)

The Early Childhood Program at Phillips Brooks School had its start in 1975. It evolved from a traditional program that was teacher planned and implemented into one in which the children construct their own learning. In 1975, school personnel felt that early childhood programs either chose a philosophy that was based on the work of Maria Montessori or a philosophy that was academically oriented, stressing rote learning. Although not Montessori trained, we found the lure of the carefully crafted wooden materials and the dedication of Montessori's many advocates difficult to resist. What emerged was a program that combined the materials and the dedication of a Montessori program with the comfort and the security of a traditional academic program. Our carefully crafted program was successful in an environment that was created by the melding of a traditional and parochial school, which was founded and housed in a parish complex. There was no reason to question the veracity of the program for the next several years. The preschool provided a steppingstone into the elementary grades. It also filled a community need for a thoughtful and well-organized early childhood program. It was successful financially, met the needs of the families in the parish, and was never reevaluated.

In 1978, the Episcopal Church and our Parish School decided to part ways. The differences were over finances and control. Our school took the bold step of leaving the church and establishing itself as a nonprofit corporation. We moved into an ex-public school facility and took all of the faculty and all but one of the school families with it. The preschool and the kindergarten formed what was known as the Primary Department. The staff consisted of six teachers, all of whom were in possession of, or working toward obtaining, early childhood education certificates. The traditional academic curriculum was jointly created, and the integration was vertical between the preschool and the kindergarten. The kindergarten relied upon dittoed worksheets and "the letter of the week." The preschool prided itself upon teaching letters, sounds, and the perfection of letter and number formation. Teaching was repetitive with lesson plans being used year after year. "Refrigerator art" was produced and reproduced, day after day, with the teacher working overtime, not in listening and planning, but in cutting shapes and making samples of finished products. Even parents complained at times about the questionable value of the repetitive and noncreative activities. The bottom line was that *rote learning was valued, and the teachers planned and implemented the program.*

Over the ensuing years, the results of studies on how children learn were published and widely accepted. However, in a school that had been founded upon and historically functioned in a traditional, teacher-led philosophical environment, there was no serious thought given to changing the approach to educating children. Change is work. Change means admitting that what one has always done may be improved upon. Change is frightening. Change was not an option.

A Time of Transition

> *Lots of folks confuse bad management with destiny.* (Kin Hubbard)

By the late 1980s, there had been an amazing number of studies published and widely circulated about the way a human brain develops, the way children learn and understand and interpret information, and how lifelong learners are nurtured in the early years of development. The director of the program and some members of the staff considered many methods of working with children during these years. However, there was no consistency within the teaching staff, many of whom were part time, and the idea of reinventing the ways of working with children was not viable. Some new ideas were tried, such as mixed-age grouping and individualized planning that considered each child's developmental level, but parent and administration pressure to stay with the tried, the true, and the secure was immense.

In the early 1990s, the school was approaching a time of transition, but the resistance to change was stronger than the desire of some and the ability of others to initiate change. By this time, themes had become the guiding principle of our early childhood program. These themes were teacher conceived, planned, and executed. The parents loved the lavish displays created in the classroom. Each year, the space was turned into an Amazon Rain Forest with papier-mâché animals hanging from 12-foot-high cardboard trees. One year, the third grade and the preschool combined efforts and put on a play written by the children and presented to the families and the rest of the school. This effort was met with a directive that the upper grades were not to spend time with the preschool. The reason given was that while we could afford to be "whimsical," the children in kindergarten through sixth grade needed to be concerned with academics. At this point, the kindergarten was removed from the Primary Department and made a part of our lower school (kindergarten through third grade). The preschool was considered a stepping-stone into the elementary school but an unimportant educational experience. The frustration level on the part of the director and staff was intense.

The Early Learning Center

In 1997, the founding school head retired, and a new leader was hired following a nationwide search. This new head had been instrumental in implementing an innovative pre-kindergarten program at her former school. She brought with her a great appreciation for our program and our goals. She was eager to help establish a place for us as contributing members of the school and understood the value of the changes we had been attempting to initiate. She brought with her an early childhood teacher from her former school. He proved to be a multi-talented teacher with boundless energy, a passion for children, and an amazing amount of creative ability. He and the director were given the opportunity to attend the Winter Study Session in Reggio Emilia, and their experience changed forever the course of the Early Learning Center at Phillips Brooks School.

A new living and working environment was created, with forethought and careful planning. Each area offered unique learning opportunities and exploration possibilities. Situations were set up that needed solutions, and the staff was trained to recognize opportunities for learning when they occurred, by plan or by chance, and to enable the experiences necessary to facilitate the understanding process.

The Early Learning Center was given the freedom to hire staff who were philosophically in tune with the emerging program. The first result of this change was the hiring of an experienced teacher found through the Reggio Emilia listserv who was relocating from the Midwest and was looking for a program very much like the one that had been created at Phillips Brooks School. The returning staff attended the summer Reggio Institute in Denver during the next two summers. Everyone became enthused about and dedicated to the program, which was renamed the Early Learning Center at Phillips Brooks School.

The Early Learning Center had become a child-centered early childhood program with an emergent curriculum. The influence of Reggio Emilia was evident, but the program was unique to the history that preceded it, the school of which it was a very active and important part, the people involved in creating it, and the families it served. The transition was not an easy one. Many roadblocks were put in the way, but with persistence and determination and an unshakable faith in the emerging program, we found ways to go over, under, or around them all, without compromising our strongly held beliefs.

Advocating and Negotiating: Faculty/Administration/Board of Trustees

> *All big changes in human history have been arrived at slowly and through many compromises.* (Eleanor Roosevelt)

A few of the members of our faculty that remained after the assumption of leadership by the new director were unprepared for, and resistant to, any additional change. Suddenly, expectations were increased, responsibilities were shared by all, and change became a way of life. Fear was the dominant emotion felt during this time: "Will I measure up?"; "Will I have to do a lot more work?"; "Will the ways I have always taught be valued?"; "What will be expected of me?"

The Board of Trustees had worked with only one Head of School. The board was committed to reassuring all members of the school community that the strengths that had made the school a successful and sought-after institution of learning in the elementary years would not be "tossed out" in the process of change and growth. Leadership styles vary as much as learning styles, and all were questioning what was to come. Would we be asked to forsake our Episcopalian roots? Would Christianity no longer be the religion of choice, although others were welcomed and recognized? Would the history and tradition of the school be ignored? Each step of the evolutionary process was examined and reexamined with ponderous attention to detail. Each step was met with resistance by some and with jubilation by others. The excitement about the future grew as the process evolved.

One symbol of *change* was the Early Learning Center. Even the name was different. Does nothing remain constant? The environment was white and pristine, well planned with a purpose behind every area and every type of material available to the children, free of clutter and confusion—a truly beautiful space in which to display the ongoing work of the children as well as the documentation of their completed work. This environment was created out of the old and inadequate space that had been messy at its best. The amount of work that it took to create the environment was obvious and frightening to teachers of other grade levels who were afraid that they would be expected to duplicate it. Of course, they were not. One's own working space is as individual as one's home and the way one attires oneself. Some comments that came back to us, usually indirectly, were openly disdainful of the changes.

The Evolving Thoughts and Feelings of Parents

Anticipating Parents' Reactions

> *Fear is that little darkroom where negatives are developed.* (Michael Pritchard)

It is well documented that each person's response to change is different. And in the best of situations, "change is a given." Throughout our process of change, it felt important to bear in mind that every person's response to change is unique, and change often elicits fear. We suspected that our changing educational philosophy and program might stir up fears in some of our parents, and thus we approached the situation in as proactive a way as was possible. We did expect parents to have questions and concerns, and so we were not surprised when we started observing and experiencing this predictable and healthy reaction.

We looked first at the possible reasons that our parent body might fear a change in our program. Our goal was to take the parent perspective in an attempt to gain a greater empathy and understanding of the ways in which we might lead parents into a different way of thinking and being. It seemed likely that parents might be uncomfortable with change because they:

- *Wondered what was wrong with the old way of doing things.* To our parents, change may have meant that we believed that "the old way of doing things was not as desirable as the new and improved way." So did "new and improved" mean that we had been teaching their child in ways that were not effective? If the answer to this question were yes, we wondered how parents could trust that the new way of teaching would not one day be thought to have its own shortcomings. It seemed imperative that this possible fear be addressed in a very honest and informative manner. The idea should be to point out where and how certain traditional principles of teaching would be maintained and why and how innovative practices lend support to what is already working.

- *Are accustomed to product vs. process programs.* We realized that parents feel proud of what their young child can do. When their preschooler comes home from school with a paper that shows he or she can read, write, and calculate, parents are impressed and pleased. When a program emphasizes the underlying process of learning, parents no longer get to hold the results in their hands and thus are unable to mail results to grandma and grandpa or display results on the front of the refrigerator for all to see. This lack of observable results can be viewed as a loss. To alleviate this loss, we felt it important to teach parents how to look for a different kind of result, a result that is not always easily captured by paper and pencil but rather observed in their child's interactions. A goal was to teach parents how to observe and value their child's ability to solve problems, communicate, observe, listen, make decisions, delay gratification, cooperate, be kind, etc. Additionally, we strove to provide parents with literature that supported the importance of these observable skills.

- *May not know where or how they fit into the new program.* We believed that with a program change comes a role change for parents. We expressed a desire to provide opportunities for parents to both observe and participate in a variety of ways during the school day.

- *Want to make sure this change is not a passing trend.* The pendulum swings, and what goes around comes around. Wise people are suspicious of change for the sake of change or for the sake of a passing trend. We felt it critical to articulate why and how our program was changing and to reassure parents that this change was trend-free. Our goal was to continue to bring parents back to a common ground—the mutual desire to create children who love to learn and learn to love.

- *Fear their child will not succeed academically.* Most parents were raised within a traditional educational model. Perhaps the most rumored and openly verbalized fear was that parents felt that their children would not succeed academically because they were not being taught in a familiar and traditional manner. This fear was predictable and understandable and one we chose to address openly through parent-teacher discussions and during one-on-one conversations.

While our list might not have covered every possibility, it certainly helped us to identify with those parents and then begin to develop a means to help them through the transition.

Helping Parents Deal with Change

Do not be too timid and squeamish about your actions. All life is an experiment. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

One of our first actions was to initiate a series of evening roundtable discussions. We hoped that these would serve two very important purposes. The first was to give us an opportunity to describe and demonstrate what the program changes meant in the day-to-day lives of the children in our program. Through a series of role-plays, teachers described how and what the children were learning. Over time, our parent's body language, questions, and comments grew to look and sound more supportive and comfortable with our educational philosophy. Initially, we knew that parents were "talking" and were not "on board" with what we were doing. Parents asked questions such as, "Will my child still learn how to read?" and made similar fear-based comments such as, "My brother's child is bringing home homework, and our son is not." Our commitment and compassion began to reflect success as the questions and comments of the parents changed, suggesting the parents increased understanding and support of what we were pursuing in the Early Learning Center.

This year, parents were given an index card and asked to write one goal for their child for the school year. These goals were written privately so that each parent felt a sense of privacy and confidence that he or she had a voice. Parent's goals for their children are often a reflection of how our present parent body accepts and supports our shift in philosophy. Previously, parents had primarily *academic or product-based goals* for their child. It would not have been uncommon to see, "I want my child to learn how to read or write." Now, parents' goals for their child seem more process based, suggested by words such as, "I hope that my child will learn how to make friends and solve problems."

We are grateful that the majority of our parent body has grown supportive and comfortable with our educational philosophy. We also understand and expect that parent-teacher relationships will always be an integral part of our program. Guiding parents through change takes time, education, and immense understanding.

The Evolution of Experiences: The Children

Creative activity could be described as a type of learning process where teacher and pupil are located in the same individual. (Arthur Koestler)

Undeniably, we live in a world of "isms." While some of these "isms" are positive, many more are not. Racism, sexism, and ageism have received much of our attention in recent years with tremendous amounts of energy being poured into their abatement. The "ism," however, that teachers—and all adults for that matter—must become sensitive to is that of adultism.

In simplest terms, adultism refers to the practice of creating a world that discounts the child. We see it all around us—in public restrooms containing only adult-sized fixtures, classrooms with counters and other workspaces too tall for the children who use them, common household implements too large for capable, small hands to utilize, and military and other "adult" budgets far larger than that spent on the education and well-being of our children. Adultism reflects an adult-centered world where expectations of children's abilities are greatly underestimated. As early childhood educators, the opportunity exists to move away from an adult-centered world to one that emerges from the child. We recognized this opportunity as the origin of our philosophical evolution, and remaining "ever aware" has helped to guide our process of change.

In our earlier thematic and academic days, we saw a classroom bustling with activity. There were a few "activity centers" with some open-ended, but mostly single-purpose, materials. The real opportunities for creativity were to come in the form of children constructing elaborate "sets" to reflect the theme of the moment. There were always a few "good children" willing to follow our explicit instructions in order to construct some necessary elements. However, the interest would always begin to wane, and we would find ourselves subtly demanding participation. The role of "teacher-turned-warden" was an exhausting proposition. The end of the day was usually much awaited. Initially, we examined this problem from the perspective of the *unwilling child*. How could we constantly be bringing in children who needed so much direction and guidance? It was not until we began to pay attention to the cutting-edge work of local and international educators that we began to suspect that the *unwilling child* was actually the *unmotivated child*—a child uninterested and unwilling to pursue our teacher-initiated and directed activities. Following a trip abroad to study innovative early learning methods, we returned to the classroom in "observation mode." We saw, heard, and experienced things that had previously gone unnoticed. Our first breakthrough came just a few weeks later.

On a walk through our campus, the children noticed many hummingbirds hovering near flowers or landing in branches of the trees. We stopped to discuss what they noticed about the birds, to gain a sense of their understanding. Out of the conversation, we learned that the children believed that hummingbirds loved red and beautiful things, liked to play, and ate flowers. They wanted to entice the birds closer to our classroom. In the ensuing weeks, we discussed ways to accomplish this goal. It was suggested that a playground with "eating places" would be just what we needed. They began to graphically design this playground, showing all the parts they felt were essential to make the birds happy. Construction began after careful combining of the best parts of all the many ideas. This project continued for eight weeks with intense excitement and participation. No longer did the teachers need to push children into activities; the children were intrinsically motivated. Another interesting occurrence was noted: the children were measuring, counting, solving problems, creating, negotiating, drawing, and planning without need of teacher-directed activities or worksheets. These were our goals for the children, and they were creating the opportunities to hone these skills themselves!

It is two years later. We have studied and created clouds, rainbows, and tree houses; examined in detail our bellybuttons and faces; and theorized about the lives of dogs and snails. Our objectives have changed. Now, our goal is to nurture a creative, independent, social child. The academics will come. What we have done in the process benefits both the child and the teacher. We learn with them; we experience with them; we emerge with them. There is no safety in what we do. We must always be prepared for the unexpected. We, also, cannot wait to get to school each day! We are committed to the idea of a classroom as a pallet of raw material waiting to be spread and shaped. The children display excitement and wonder daily. They are fluent in many artistic languages, and they invigorate the lives of the teachers with whom they work.

A Process "In Process"

> *You have to leave the city of your comfort and go into the wilderness of your intuition. What you'll discover will be wonderful. What you'll discover will be yourself.* (Alan Alda)

From the conception of the Early Learning Center program in 1975, through the quiet years of stagnation, and into the turmoil of change, there has been one common goal. That goal has been to create an environment in which children can feel safe, can feel loved, and can explore the world around them. We may not always have understood how to best fulfill these needs. We may not always have made the best choices. However, we never stopped searching, and we never stopped trying.

Just as a child is never a finished product, neither is our early childhood program. In the past three years, with the advent of new leadership, new enthusiasm, and new knowledge, we have been able to move rapidly toward our ideal. However, we will never stop looking for ways to improve. We will never stop studying and exploring. We will never give up our ideals. We will always put children first.

> *The great French Marshall Lyautey once asked his gardener to plant a tree. The gardener objected that the tree was slow growing and would not reach maturity for 100 years. The Marshall replied, "In that case, there is no time to lose; plant it this afternoon!"* (John F. Kennedy)

Notes

[1] A revised version of this paper is available in the spring 2001 issue of *Early Childhood Research & Practice*, available at http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v3n1/dulik.html.

[2] Quotations are taken from *Do It! Let's Get Off Our Buts*, by John Roger and Peter McWilliams (Prelude Press, 1991).

Roundtable III

From Play to Literacy: Implications for the Classroom

Sara Wilford

Abstract

This paper delineates five literacy goals that may be reached by supporting children's natural inclination towards playful endeavors. To illustrate how these goals may be achieved, five aspects of early childhood classrooms that illustrate the value of play and playful attitudes in fostering children's literacy development are described. Literacy Goal 1 is the development of symbolic processes as they relate to literacy learning. Literacy Goal 2 is the fostering of language growth, both semantic and contextual. Literacy Goal 3 is the ability to solve problems in a meaningful, creative context. Literacy Goal 4 is the disposition to persist in literacy activities, as opposed to mere practice or rote learning. Literacy Goal 5 is the joyful engagement we desire for children as they enter all aspects of literacy: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The paper explores connections between these literacy goals and five aspects of early childhood classrooms in which play is valued and literacy fostered, illuminating ways in which the goals may be attained.

There are many perspectives on the connections between play and literacy. Writers and speakers concerned with this topic include professional educators in the area of literacy development, early childhood education specialists, and child development experts. My own interest evolved initially from my years as a first- and second-grade public school teacher. Later, as director of the Sarah Lawrence Early Childhood Center, I wrote a book for parents called *What You Need to Know when Your Child Is Learning to Read* (Wilford, 1999), a book that focuses on variations in timing and domain among children as they seek different entry points into literacy. I wanted to emphasize the fact that parents and other good observers of young children can use the individual differences demonstrated by emergent readers and writers to facilitate literacy development. Most recently, my colleagues at the Sarah Lawrence Child Development Institute and I undertook the coproduction of a public television documentary called *When a Child Pretends* (1999). The filming took place at our Early Childhood Center, and at Central Park East I Elementary School in East Harlem. All of these experiences have led me to consider the framework of this paper. To clarify, I define *early childhood* as spanning birth to age 8, and my definition of *play* extends past its pure form as exemplified by imaginative play to include active, child-initiated and adult-facilitated experiences characterized by playfulness and the disposition to investigate.

I believe that there are five distinct literacy goals that can be reached by supporting children's natural inclination towards playful endeavors. To illustrate how these goals may be achieved, I have identified five aspects of early childhood classrooms that value play and playful attitudes and are particularly relevant to fostering children's literacy.

Literacy Goals

Literacy Goal 1 is the development of *symbolic processes* as they relate to literacy learning. For instance, the understanding that a prop or a person can symbolize or represent something or someone else in a pretend play drama underpins the realization that a written word stands for a spoken word, and that letters, alone or in combination, can represent sounds.

Literacy Goal 2 is the fostering of *language growth*, both semantic and contextual. In their dramas and discussions, children expand their vocabularies and elaborate on the meanings of their words and actions so as to be understood by others.

Literacy Goal 3 is *the ability to solve problems* in a meaningful, creative context. The problem solving that children engage in as they build a skyscraper or an airport, work through social dilemmas, or at later ages construct a game with rules has direct implications for toleration of trial and error crucial in creative writing and the prediction and decoding necessary for tackling a challenging text.

Literacy Goal 4 is *the motivation or disposition to persist* in literacy activities. While the term "practice" can imply dry and meaningless rote learning, motivation or the disposition to persist turns practice into pleasureful work such as rereading familiar texts as a bridge to more difficult ones, struggling with a book whose subject or story is of intrinsic interest to the reader, writing an important message such as "Don't knock my building down," and dictating a letter or story. Motivation can even affect handwriting as children strive to make meaningful writing clear for others to read.

Literacy Goal 5 is the *joyful engagement* we desire for our children as they enter all aspects of literacy: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This goal is intimately tied to motivation and to the centrality of *story* in human lives. It is the "fuel" that feeds a lifelong thirst for literacy and can be seen in children's play with the sounds of language, their ebullience in the creation of dramatic scenarios, and the zest they bring to the choice of a new storybook or writing effort.

With these goals in mind, let us turn to aspects of early childhood classrooms where play is valued and literacy fostered. I have tried to make specific connections between literacy goals and aspects of early childhood classrooms, although some overlapping themes are inevitable.

Classroom Aspects

Classroom Aspect 1 is a *classroom structure* that includes *a flexible schedule* and *sufficient inviting materials* to allow opportunities for imaginative play, the development of symbolic processes, and the ensuing effects on literacy development. Children need unbroken periods of time during which they can construct their scenarios, as well as props and materials to support and encourage their dramas. A. A. Milne intuitively understood this need as so beautifully described in his children's poem "Nursery Chairs" from *When We Were Very Young*:

> One of the chairs is South America,
> One of the chairs is a ship at sea,
> One is a cage for a great big lion,
> And one is a chair for me.
>
> Shall I go off to South America?
> Shall I put out on my ship to sea?
> Or get in my cage and be lions and tigers?
> Or—shall I be only me?
> (Milne, 1924/1952, pp. 16-17)

Gunther Kress (1997) helps us make connections between the symbolic act of pretending and literacy development in his book *Before Writing: Rethinking the Paths to Literacy*:

> ...in learning to read and write, children come as thoroughly experienced makers of signs in any medium that is at hand. [There is a] wide range of media which they employ as a matter of course—toys and constructions of various kinds; Lego blocks; cardboard boxes; blankets; chairs; corners of rooms; pens and paper; scissors; paste and paper.... The form and the material of the signs made by children are for them expressive of the meanings which they intend to make.... Say children want to play "camping" in a room in their house, and they need a "tent" at that point. Or they want to play "pirates" and therefore need a "pirate ship." A cardboard box provides a container, in which they can sit, it serves as the "vessel," and the carpet as the "ocean." (p. 9)

Thus we see that our first literacy goal, the development of symbolic processes, relies heavily on a classroom structure with a flexible schedule and materials that foster imaginative play. In their dramas, children expand their capacities to pretend that a prop is something else, relative and useful to the drama. For instance, inch cubes may be "meatballs," a crayon may stand for a "shot giver" (or hypodermic needle), and—perhaps too often—the unit block may be a surreptitious gun. The child player may represent another person: a mother, a father, a doctor, a baby, or even a dog. Dramatic play also depends on verbal cues. Although young children may indicate their wishes and intentions by their bodily movements, the words that make up their directives, pleas, and conversational dialogue are key to getting their intentions across. *The child's understanding that a common object may represent an important prop in her drama, and that a spoken word represents an object or an action, are precursors to understanding that a written word stands for a spoken word, and that letters—alone or in combination—represent sounds.*

Classroom Aspect 2 implies an *environment* that encourages literacy growth. This environment fosters phonemic awareness, ever-expanding vocabulary, and meaningful expression, crucial aspects of our second literacy goal—fostering language growth.

Songs, rhymes, and chants are all opportunities for children to play with the sounds of language and develop phonemic sensitivity. Many of these rhymes and songs are requested by children themselves. For instance, "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" contains sets of rhyming words that sound the same—star...are, high...sky—even though they don't look the same in written form. Because the words rhyme, they are predictable: rhyming helps children anticipate the word that will come next in a phrase or a sentence. This literacy practice is helpful and enjoyable for children, giving them a strategy to apply to written language. In the case of "Twinkle, Twinkle" or "Willaby Wallaby Woo, an Elephant Sat on You," teachers would hesitate to transcribe these songs onto experience charts because of the variations in spelling. On the other hand, a song such as "Bingo" lends itself perfectly to making connections between singing words and letters, and writing and reading words and letters: an experience chart of this song provides a prominent repeated word—BINGO—and the possibility of pointing out the letters that make up that word—B...I...N...G...O.

Another important part of the environment is a well-stocked classroom library, inviting children to pursue their interests as they work on the conventions of book reading—turning pages from right to left, scanning pages and lines from left to right and print from top to bottom, or simply following the pictures as they "track" the story. A library of predictable books such as Bill Martin, Jr.'s (1966/1983) *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*, along with many delightful Big Books for whole class use, provide opportunities for teachers to invite children's participation as they add to both spoken and written vocabulary, encourage prediction, and point out repeated words and phrases, beginning and ending sounds, and word patterns. In addition to book and story times, meeting times allow children to use words in new and meaningful ways as they share significant ideas and events with each other.

A designated place for play with graphic and written symbols is also an important environmental addition to children's literacy growth. Here they write and draw, cut and paste, and staple. They dictate stories or letters, make envelopes, write their names, create important signs for themselves, make meaning as they scribble, and engage in what Lilian Katz frequently refers to as "cross-child talk":

K.: William! Are you making a rainbow?
W.: Yes! How did you know?
K.: Because it's got all the colors in it!
[Short Pause]
W.: What are *you* making?
K.: The ABCDEFGs and the numbers.
You know, the song ABCDEFG....

Clearly, in addition to all of the above opportunities, imaginative play scenes where children can challenge each other's actions, words, and meanings are vitally important. A classroom that invites pretending provides, perhaps, the most fertile ground for language growth, both contextual and semantic.

Classroom Aspect 3 suggests a *curriculum* that is relevant to children's interests and developmental stages, and *rich in problem-solving opportunities* necessary for the achievement of our third literacy goal. Such a curriculum might, for the very youngest children, involve the teacher restructuring a specific area of the room. In the following account by early childhood teacher Miriam Mathew (1998), we can see the effect of meaningful room arrangement on early childhood curriculum and the very early literacy behaviors of young 3-year-olds:

> It was spring time and the children had come together as a group....[but] we noticed that [they] paid little attention to the books in the reading center. I had the hunch that if we made the area around the bookshelf more comfortable and attractive, the children might want to spend more time in the area and connect with the books. By now we knew the interests of the children, so we could select books related to their favorite topics. These were vehicles, animals, rain, and rainbows.
>
> ...the bookshelf was rearranged with books by Eric Carle, Pat Hutchins, Leo Leoni, and David McKee. The subjects of the books were varied so as to appeal to everyone's taste. Ten colorful cushions and two Saudi Arabian Bedouin seats formed a cozy L-shaped arrangement. A red rug added warmth and definition to the area.
>
> ...Structuring the environment in the threes class helped develop a predisposition to literacy activities. This in turn helped the teachers to attend to the affective and cognitive aspects of the children by providing more materials related to reading and writing activities. Children who came regularly to the center got interested in books, stories, and illustrations, and increased their verbal skills...dialogues between children increased social interaction. [The children] got exposure to terms like: author, make-believe story, skipping a page, turning a page, etc.... They thought about open-ended questions, made predictions, presented their comments, and listened to others. (pp. 4-10)

Trips and other curricular investigations invite additional opportunities for literacy. Some experiences come directly from the children's spontaneous interests and may result in the re-creation of an office, a store, or perhaps a restaurant. This activity in turn can lead to discussing the necessary elements needed to replicate a restaurant, such as drawing the restaurant space on butcher block paper or building it with blocks, making the "specials" from written recipes, and creating menus for the customers.

Additional meaningful experiences may be spurred by the interests of teachers. One gifted early childhood teacher explores process, no matter which age she is teaching, by choosing to introduce investigations that she feels will demystify natural phenomena frequently taken for granted by children (and often by adults!). She hatches butterflies from baby caterpillars in early fall, takes her class on the adventure from raw apples...to applesauce...to apple pie, or taps a maple tree to gather sap for maple syrup in the spring. The explicit sequencing inherent in these experiences has important implications for the reading process, and this teacher is careful to document what's happening at each stage by mounting photographs that are "read" by the children from left to right and top to bottom.

In another classroom, teacher and children collaborate as the excitement around Halloween builds and skeletons are a high priority. The teacher finds a book illustrating the traditional African American spiritual "Dry Bones." Children want to see a skeleton, so she responds by cooking a whole fish, which they sample after watching her carefully lift the bone from the body. The teacher then arranges a trip to a biology laboratory, where the lab assistant dissects a fish for them and then introduces them to the human skeleton. By this time, Halloween costumes are long forgotten, and the children are busily drawing representations of the fish and its organs... while dictating a new chart of questions to investigate.

Meaningful curricular experiences, such as these just explored, are literacy come to life through action. They also represent the open-endedness, investigative, and trial-and-error aspects of many activities previously described: children striving to solve social dilemmas in their dramatic play encounters, children eager to discover answers to questions that lead to literate communication and understanding, children solving problems in reading and writing situations where authentic communication replaces "right" and "wrong" judgments.

Classroom Aspect 4 addresses the importance of creating a *climate of persistence*. Without intrinsic motivation and the disposition to persist in literacy activities, the heart of our fourth literacy goal, practice is a dry and useless term. This is not to say that practice is unimportant, only that it need not be meaningless—and therefore boring—to the child. To watch the evolution of children's writing is a humbling experience, for just as we adults despair of a name ever being written from left to right, or a sentence from top to bottom (instead of up the page!), we are instructed by children that their logical and playful explorations of print were serious efforts to figure out the *il*logics of printed English. Furthermore, children's serious work to understand how letters and sounds connect, their persistence at the much (and mistakenly) maligned "inventive spelling," can be described as totally logical and motivated practice. Children who grow up in the Netherlands, or those learning Hebrew, for example, receive systematic phonics instruction when learning to read and write because Dutch and Hebrew are based upon direct sound/symbol correspondence. Becoming literate in English, however, demands a much more flexible and experimental approach, allowing for multiple entry points, with meaningful text as the bait. Sometimes "worksheets" and handwriting exercises are helpful, and even fun: they are only deadly if perceived as the answer to literacy and legibility.

In considering motivation, the basis of self-initiated practice, it is important to acknowledge the place of affect in learning. Kress (1997) views imagination and cognition as "entirely and closely related," adding the following reflection:

> It seems the case that, as biological beings, we have different dispositions towards the world, differential preferences in relation to our senses. One child might prefer physical three-dimensional representation, another the distanced representation of drawing or writing. Another child might prefer to represent herself or himself through the body, in dance or gesture. Compelling a child to forget his or her preferred mode will have affective consequences. (pp. 154-155)

Imaginative play, however, is *every* child's learning mode to some extent, uniting pleasure and inquiry. The importance of the socioemotional aspects of development for children's success in school have been demonstrated by substantial research, beginning with the High/Scope Perry Preschool Curriculum Study (Weikart, 1987, pp. 169-188). When we forget to make room for children's differing approaches to literacy learning, their playful natures, and their need for choices of multiple entry points into literacy, we not only limit their chances of success, but severely curtail their motivation. Lilian Katz's emphasis on the importance of children's dispositions and feelings in all learning endeavors supports this premise (Katz, 1987, pp. 153-154). And we now have the results of a longitudinal study by Marcon, Randall, and Brooks (1997) titled "Differential Impact of Preschool Models on Achievement of Inner-City Children":

> This study examined the effects of early childhood experiences on a group of inner-city children as they approached the transition to junior high school. Data on 249 sixth graders enrolled in 67 schools in a large urban school district were used in the study. The sample, about 62% of which was female, was 96% African American; 76% qualified for subsidized lunch based upon low family income.... The results indicated that 6th grade academic achievement was enhanced by early learning experiences that emphasized socioemotional development over academic preparation.... While reading appeared to be the area of achievement most broadly affected by kindergarten experiences, boys' overall achievement in 6th grade was consistently higher if kindergarten teachers had nurtured early social development. (pp. 1-10)

Thus, a climate that promotes feeling good about yourself, being recognized for who you are and what you *can* do, has powerful effects on the persistence and motivation so crucial to academic achievement.

Classroom Aspect 5 highlights our final literacy goal, *celebrating the centrality of story* in human lives and the *joy* that is possible when we as teachers understand that all aspects of literacy learning—speaking, listening, reading, and writing—can come together as a celebration of our mutual stories.

Jerome Bruner (1994) writes, "My life as a student of mind has taught me one incontrovertible lesson. Mind is never free of precommitment.... Our precommitment about the nature of a life is that it is a story, some narrative however incoherently put together" (p. 36). Vivian Paley (1990) talks about "reaching children through stories, dictating stories, creating stories, listening to each other's stories" (p. 6). This is why reading to children and hooking them into the wonder of story books is such a powerful impetus for reading. And to use one of Lilian Katz's categories of learning, reading to children will help them acquire the *disposition* to read for themselves. For example, Maurice Sendak's (1963) *Where the Wild Things Are* is a terrific story that children—especially 4-year-old children—identified with and *demanded*! If left to the adults, who were appalled by the "scary" pictures, this book might not have become one of the enduring children's classics of the 20th century.

Implications for Later Literacy Learning

For those who doubt the continuing connections between play and literacy, I offer inspiration from an alternative public school in East Harlem, New York. At Central Park East I, upper elementary age youngsters are given time to build with blocks, draw and paint, and construct three-dimensional representations of their ideas as avenues for the expression of thought. The enthusiasm for learning that permeates their classrooms is palpable.

A sixth-grader reads to an audience of her peers, gathered to hear and critique a recent story. The story has been written in a form newly chosen by this student, a children's book. Its characters are animals, and include a hero, a heroine in distress, and some life-threatening villains. It is a story about conquering fear. The audience is rapt, as the author reads from the book she herself will soon be binding. Comments are supportive, enthusiastic, and honest. In elaborating on her literacy process, the writer tells them, "You know me...I just write and write and write."

From these glimpses of literacy skill among older children who are allowed opportunities for playful expression, we can be renewed in our understanding that literacy is not learned in an isolated place or as a fragmented activity. Perhaps we should be skeptical about the artificial distinctions we draw among the designations of early childhood, middle childhood, and adolescence.

In conclusion, acknowledging the literacy implications in children's play should be seen as supportive of, rather than in opposition to, the acquisition of literacy skill. Literacy "benchmarks" have their place as guidelines in assessing skill development. Standardized tests are a "given" in most teachers' and children's lives. But these often arbitrary tools should never force us to abandon our focus on individual children and authentic assessment as we connect our goals with practice. Meaningful literacy teachings and learnings must be woven into the entire fabric of classroom life, irrespective of the ages and backgrounds of the children. Only then will we truly become a nation of readers, writers, and thinkers.

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Emotions Count: Scaffolding Children's Representations of Themselves and Their Feelings to Develop Emotional Intelligence

Claudia Shuster

Abstract

Following a discussion of the preschools of Reggio Emilia and the theory of multiple intelligences, this paper synthesizes research on children's emotional development—recognition of young children as "emotional compatriots" and the related importance of developing their emotional intelligence, the role of adult scaffolding to support children's development, and the intensification of children's learning when they represent their thinking in multiple media. The paper then describes a curriculum process that enables teachers to develop young children's emotional intelligence. The process engages teachers in supporting young children to identify and express their feelings and related experiences in multiple ways. The paper describes the curriculum process and specific scaffolding strategies teachers can use to support students' efforts. Elements in the curriculum process include storytelling, drawing self-portraits and action pictures, and story writing. The culminating activity, "Story Circle," provides a forum for children to share and discuss their work with peers. The range of representational opportunities embedded in this process enables children with a variety of intelligences to identify and share their feelings in meaningful ways.

The Preschools of Reggio Emilia and the Importance of Multiple Intelligences

The Hundred Languages of Children (Malaguzzi, 1996) is a metaphor for the myriad ways in which young children learn and communicate. It is an image that represents the underlying philosophy of the preschools of Reggio Emilia, Italy, the most highly esteemed early childhood programs in the world. The pedagogy of Reggio Emilia emphasizes the dynamic collaboration of young children and teachers, working together in projects that support the "Hundred Languages," projects in which children represent themselves, their feelings, and their understanding of their world in multiple ways.

Howard Gardner (1993) has described the schools of Reggio Emilia as "remarkable…[places where] teachers know how to listen to children, how to allow them to take initiative, and yet how to guide them in productive ways" (pp. ix-xi). He commends them as educational environments that pay "attention to cognitive growth and concern with matters of temperament, feelings and spirit" (p. xiii).

Gardner's (1983) theory of multiple intelligences is in synchrony with the Reggio philosophy. He proposes that intelligence is composed not of one but of several separate modalities. Gardner suggests that these multiple intelligences are not fixed at birth but are plastic. Thus, experiences can have a significant impact on their development. Gardner encourages educators to provide opportunities that stimulate children to develop all of their intelligences. Expanding on this theory, Forman (1994) suggests that children learn more deeply when they have opportunities to represent their thinking in multiple media.

Unfortunately, linguistic intelligence is often the primary focus of teaching young children (Malaguzzi, 1996); many teachers ignore the importance of facilitating the development of the others (Shuster & Rarey, 1998). This oversight is currently being challenged. For example Goleman (1995) proposes that emotional intelligence, the combination of intrapersonal intelligence (the ability to understand one's thoughts, feelings, and actions) and interpersonal intelligence (the ability to understand other people's thoughts, feelings, and actions), plays a crucial role in both personal and work life. He emphasizes the importance of increasing the level of social and emotional competence in children as part of their regular educational program and reports on several recent efforts to develop emotional intelligence in school settings.

Recognition and Support of Young Children's Emotional Life

Psychologist David Elkind (1993) proposes that adults often fail to detect that children are our "emotional compatriots." Perhaps because young children think so differently from adults, we are likely to maintain the mistaken belief that children do not have the same feelings as adults or we may minimize or trivialize the significance of young children's day-to-day experiences and the power of their related emotions. As a result, we may fail to recognize, acknowledge, or respond to children's feelings. Research on American boys (Pollack, 1998) suggests that we are likely to compound our error with boys by actively teaching them to suppress their feelings and avoid expressing them. The efforts to develop children's emotional intelligence reported by Goleman (1995) may be in part a response aimed at reversing these cultural patterns.

The Relationship of Learning to Social-Emotional Content

Other researchers have examined the relationship between children's academic learning and the social-emotional content of their activities. According to Fivush (1997), children remember more accurately and are more competent in discussing past events when they have an emotional connection to those events. In addition, when youngsters have opportunities to engage in stories or activities with meaningful emotional content, their writing and speaking following these experiences are more detailed, more accurate, and more coherent (Liwag & Stein, 1995; Risemberg & Zimmerman, 1992). Children's dramatization of an emotional reaction, for example through role play, also seems to have a positive influence; children who participate in these kinds of activities use more advanced vocabulary and more sophisticated grammar when they are involved in other types of activities (Vedeler, 1997).

Role of Scaffolding to Support Children's Learning

In the preschools of Reggio Emilia, the teacher focuses on provoking discovery and learning "through a kind of alert, inspired facilitation and stimulation of children's dialogue, co-action, and co-construction of knowledge" (Edwards, 1993, p. 154). In this role, the teacher scaffolds children's thinking and feeling by providing support that is sensitively attuned to the child's current level of competencies (Wood & Middleton, 1975; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). This support often takes the form of teacher–child discourse in which the adult questions, summarizes, clarifies, and predicts to encourage the child's explorations, representations, and thinking (Berk & Winsler, 1995).

Development of a Curriculum Process

Based upon the synthesis of this research—the theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983); recognition of young children as "emotional compatriots" (Elkind, 1993) and the related importance of developing their emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995); the role of adult scaffolding to support children's development (Wood & Middleton, 1975; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976); and the intensification of children's learning when they represent their thinking in multiple media (Forman, 1994)—I have developed a curriculum process to enhance young children's emotional intelligence. It provides opportunities for 6- to 7-year-old children to identify and represent themselves, their experiences, and their emotions in multiple ways and to develop empathy for their peers by their participation in the mutual process of sharing and discussing their representations. In addition, I have analyzed and identified four scaffolding strategies that I utilized to support the children's involvement in the curriculum process.

In a pilot study (1998-1999), I investigated several teaching strategies based upon the work of the preschools of Reggio Emilia and an exploration of the knowledge base related to teacher scaffolding strategies. The initial strategies that I utilized included asking children provocative questions, encouraging them to observe themselves carefully in a mirror and think deeply, and providing multiple means for them to express their feelings. In my work with 20 first-graders, I identified some resistance to their sharing feelings. For example, several 6- to 7-year-old boys told me that they are never sad, angry, and/or scared and refused to represent these feelings. Other children simply remained silent. I attempted to engage these youngsters by sharing an autobiographical story from my childhood to evoke a specific feeling. When successful, this strategy resulted in their sharing stories that seemed to mimic mine rather than describing their own most powerful experience related to the emotion we were addressing.

In response, I have investigated and developed new ways to change this pattern of denial and suppression and to help young children recognize and express their feelings and related experiences. These activities involve the multiple forms of representation utilized in Reggio Emilia and emulated by American educators who reflect this tradition in a systematic way (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1993; Forman, 1994).

The process I developed includes activities for 6- to 7-year-old youngsters that are implemented at least weekly by their teacher. The teacher supports the children's development of emotional intelligence by engaging them in work that helps them (1) to be more aware of their own emotions and the experiences that make them feel this way; (2) to represent their emotions through storytelling, self-portraits and other drawings, and writing or dictation; (3) to share their experiences and representations with peers; (4) to recognize, respect, and show empathy for other children's shared stories and related emotions; and (5) to use language and other effective, non-aggressive strategies to express their emotions and get their needs met. These elements are all critical in the development of emotional intelligence.

Before initiating the process, I asked the children to create self-portraits on their own. The children's first efforts provided a baseline to compare with their future work while engaged in the process with me over the next months. The children each completed a self-portrait (a drawing of their own face) on their own without adult presence; I provided no prompts or scaffolding—just paper, pencils, and crayons. Then I had the children each complete a self-portrait by providing a large mirror that enabled them to observe carefully in addition to paper, pencil, and crayons.

The Process

The process includes a series of eight steps:

Triggering Emotions with a Photograph

The process starts with the teacher's triggering children's memories by sharing a photograph of an expressive child and then encouraging the children to demonstrate or describe the facial expression of the child in the photo. Sharing a picture of a smiling child, I asked questions like, "How is this little boy feeling?" followed by "how can you tell?" Children's responses included "Happy; he is smiling…you can see his teeth…."

Storytelling about the Photograph

Then the teacher asks each child to tell a story about why the child in the photo may feel this way. Children mentioned events that they associated with pleasure—for example, eating a favorite food, playing a game, shopping for a favorite toy. When I provided time for deeper thinking, the youngsters also shared more significant experiences related to shared family activities such as birthdays, holiday celebrations, family outings, and vacations.

Storytelling about Yourself

Next the teacher asks the children to share a story of a time when they each felt the same way as the child in the photograph. For example, when I discussed feeling scared, some children talked about getting lost, getting accidentally locked in a room, being sick in the hospital, or fears related to the first day of school.

Observing Yourself in the Mirror

After each child has shared a personal story, the children look in a large mirror and describe their own facial expression related to the feeling in their story. For example, Evan shared [my lip] "gets all crumpley" [when I am sad]. Jimmy described "I look like a vampire when I look mean [to describe his angry expression]" (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Children observing themselves in mirror while teacher scaffolds.

Drawing Self-portraits

Once the children have observed themselves in the mirror, they draw self-portraits that express their emotion. Some make observations as they stare in the mirror and draw. For example, Carol suggested, "I'm so angry that I'm so hot that I'm sweating [as she drew water droplets on her self-portrait].... I have these bumps that come out [pointing to swelling in her throat that she reproduced in her drawing]." Jose, observing and representing his furious expression, said, "I look like a cobra eye" (see Figure 2).

Drawing Action Pictures

Some children seem to find it easier to identify and share their experiences and emotions by representing the details of the event that precipitated their feeling. Therefore, the children also have the opportunity to draw a picture of the action of their story. For example, Maria drew a picture of her father inside the garage while she stood in her house shouting "Dad, Dad," expressing her fear that that she had been left all alone. Jose, angry that he couldn't ride his bike because of the bad weather, drew a picture of his bike parked in the driveway in front of the family car outside his grandmother's house with a sky filled with rain and lightning. Rather than focusing on the details of his sad facial expression in a self-portrait, Lucas drew a picture of himself falling out of a tree just before he broke his arm.

Writing and Reading Stories

After drawing, the children write or dictate their stories and share them with the teacher by reading the completed story. Some of the powerful themes of the children's stories include sadness at the loss of a beloved relative or pet; fears about illness, traveling on an airplane, being in the dark, shadows on the wall, or the "boggie man"; or anger at perceived mistreatment by siblings. For example, Gena dictated, "I don't like it when my sister says, 'I wish I can smack you,' and I don't like when my sister says 'I hate you,' and I hate my sister sometimes. I don't like when my mom yells at me, and I don't like when I don't get what I want. But you don't get what you want when you want it."

Sharing in Story Circle

The process culminates in Story Circle when the children share and discuss their work with their classmates. During Story Circle, modeled after the class meetings described in the Responsive Classroom model (Charney, 1992), the children's classmates are encouraged to ask questions and make thoughtful comments. Story Circle provides all the children with many opportunities to share their experiences and emotions with their peers and to learn about and empathize with the experiences and emotions of others. When Evan told about his great sadness in his story describing the time his Mom got rid of his cat (because it had fleas), his teacher praised the detailed drawing he made of his cat. She

Figure 2. Children drawing self-portraits while teacher scaffolds.

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suggested that hanging a drawing like that in his room could help him to remember his cat. Several other children chimed in with similar stories about having a photograph of a grandparent no longer alive or making a picture of a lost pet, for example.

Addressing Multiple Intelligences

The process described above enables children to represent their emotions and experiences in multiple ways. Children with a strong bodily-kinesthetic intelligence are likely to be especially effective in making facial expressions that reflect their emotions and be more interested in observing themselves in the mirror. These abilities may lead these youngsters to create especially powerful self-portraits (see Figures 3, 4, and 5).

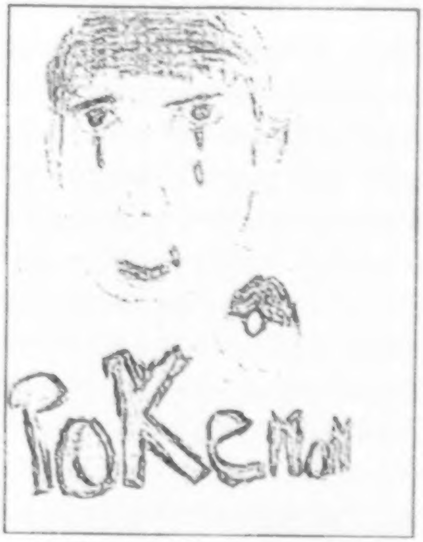

Figure 3. Child's self-portrait of himself feeling sad.

Other children with more strength in linguistic intelligence are likely to focus on sharing elaborate stories about their experiences or writing about them. In a story, Cindy dictated, "I got lost in the circus. And I went with another woman to the desk. And I went to the restaurant in the circus. I felt very, very, very sad, and I wanted my cousin Ryan and my other cousin named Charlie. It was my saddest day of my entire life." Writing his story, Jose described not being able to ride his bike "because I didn't know it was thundering outside. My bike was out there. I was afraid it was going to hit lightning but I was lucky. It almost did, but it didn't."

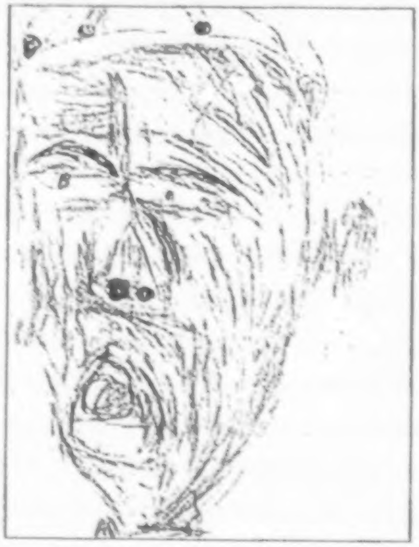

Figure 4. Child's self-portrait of himself feeling angry.

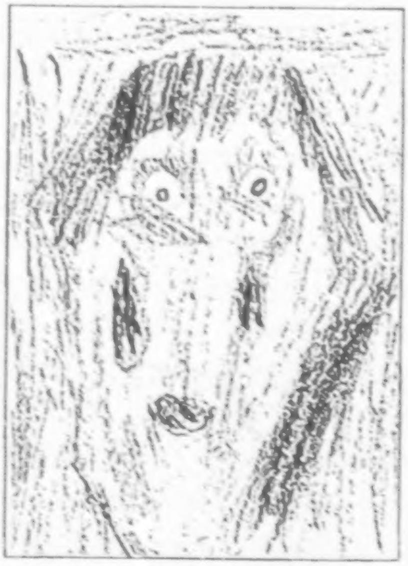

Figure 5. Child's self-portrait of herself feeling scared.

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Children who have a strong spatial intelligence are likely to be interested in communicating their feelings in their drawings, especially in the details of their action pictures. For example, Evan drew a picture of his family picnic showing all seven members of his family including his mother (whom he drew from the rear on a ladder picking apples for the apple pie) and himself taking a nap on a blanket (see Figure 6). In drawing her action picture of feeling scared on the first day of school (because she did not know anyone), Carol drew many short yellow and brown lines depicting children seen from above as they lined up with their new classmates for the flag raising ceremony. The drawing appears to be a powerful representation of their anonymity from her perspective.

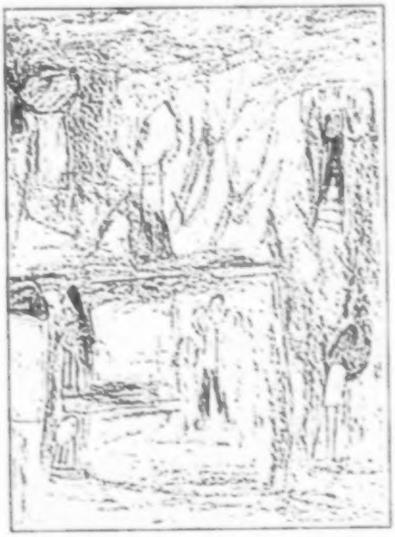

Figure 6. Child's action picture of his family picnic.

The Teacher's Ongoing Role—Scaffolding Strategies

The active role that teachers play in interacting with children to support their development is called scaffolding (Wood & Middleton, 1975; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). Teachers scaffold children's development and learning by providing structures that support them to stretch their understanding beyond the level at which they've been functioning on their own. Vygotsky described this concept as the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1986).

During the process described above, the teacher plays a pivotal role by using scaffolding strategies that support the children's efforts in four specific ways:

Setting a Positive Emotional Tone

The teacher creates a positive emotional tone when she conveys warmth, respect, and a listening attitude through eye contact and other body language, voice tone, and physical contact as appropriate. She also identifies, accepts, and shows interest in the children's feelings. For example, when the children hesitate to reply, the teacher might say in a gentle tone, "Take your time; we're all angry some of the time." When a child mimics the angry feeling in the photograph by making a furious grimace, the teacher observes with a serious demeanor and might say, "Wow, what a fierce expression. Everybody will know you're angry. It's important to be able to share how we are feeling, and our face shows how we are feeling." When Jose shared his anger at not being able to ride his bike on a rainy day, the teacher responded with a serious expression and said, "I can understand how angry you were because you couldn't ride your bike."

In another situation when a child described being frightened by an adult who popped out of a closet unexpectedly at Halloween, the teacher responded in a thoughtful tone, "When something happens that you weren't expecting, it feels scary."

Building Shared Understanding

The teacher shows how carefully she has been listening and builds mutual understanding with the children when she repeats the child's ideas in the child's own words or restates the child's ideas. She may try to add clarity by describing what she thinks the child is sharing and representing. Then she may ask the child to confirm, expand, and/or refine her own restatement. Occasionally the teacher will also summarize the child's statements to provide a memory for the child and his peers. For example, the teacher asked the children to review their examples, "So we've been talking about feeling scared. First you, Maria, talked about [teacher hesitates to encourage Maria to repeat herself] and Maria said, "Scared of the dark." The teacher continued, "Then you, Evan, shared." Evan remembered and repeated "When my baby brother had a bad dream"; and the teacher replied, "That can be very scary" [acknowledging these experiences as frightening].

When a child indicated that he liked the curved lines on either side of the smiling mouth of his classmate's happy portrait because they conveyed her happiness, the teacher asked all the children to smile. Then she had them feel to see if they had the same lines form when they smiled, and observe their friends to see if they also had the same curved lines appear on their faces.

Extending Understanding

The teacher extends the children's understanding of their feelings and experiences and those of others when she asks meaningful, open-ended questions to stimulate, provoke, expand thinking, and avoid limiting conversation to a sense of a "right" answer. Maria shared a story about feeling scared that she was left alone when (from her perspective) her father was hiding in the garage. When she told the class that she let her father know that she didn't want him to do that again, the teacher emphasized that Maria's telling her dad how she felt was important and asked if he had hidden again after the first episode. When the child responded that he had not repeated this behavior, the teacher rejoined, "when we let people know how we are feeling and what we don't like, we can make a difference."

Supporting Empathy and Mutual Respect

The teacher supports the children's feelings of empathy and mutual respect by identifying common elements in their feelings and experiences and by encouraging dialogue among the children, observing and not intervening unless necessary during their conversations. For example, one child shared that she was scared on the first day of school because "you don't know the teacher…you might miss your mother." The teacher encouraged other youngsters to share their fears about the first day of school, and a girl told about not knowing any of the children in her class and not knowing the principal.

When a child shared his detailed drawing of a cat he had lost, the teacher emphasized the significance of his creating and displaying a picture that reminded him of his beloved pet. Then she encouraged other classmates to share strategies they used to remember lost loved ones. Youngsters shared their ideas of displaying a photograph of a grandparent, a painting of a dog that died and so forth.

As the teacher supports the children by using these scaffolding strategies, the children themselves begin to emulate her and use the same strategies to support each other. For example, when Maria shared that her father was hiding in the garage, another child asked a thoughtful, open-ended question, "Why was he hiding on you?" and attentively awaited a reply. A second child said that Maria's story reminded him of Evan's story of finding himself alone in his home except that the feelings at the end of the two stories were different. In Maria's, she was scared and never learned why her dad was hiding. In Evan's, he was happy because he learned the reason for his parents' absence: they hid and then reappeared to surprise him on his birthday.

Conclusion

The classroom process described above provides children with many opportunities to recognize and share their emotions in multiple ways and helps them to express emotions and experiences that are especially significant to them. Examples of children's self-portraits prior to their participating in the process, contrasted with examples of children's self-portraits once they began to participate in the process, present powerful images of the development of the youngsters' representations of themselves and their emotions (see Figures 7 and 8). This work suggests that when children are given ongoing opportunities to share their experiences and express their related emotions through storytelling, drawing, writing, and sharing with their peers in Story Circle, they can more meaningfully integrate their experiences and represent them. Through this process, their contributions during Story Circle suggest that they also are developing both greater understanding of themselves and greater empathy for others—the hallmarks of emotional intelligence.

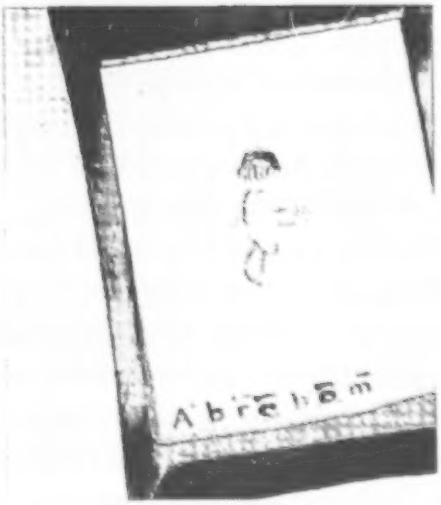

Figure 7. Adam's self-portrait before participating in the process.

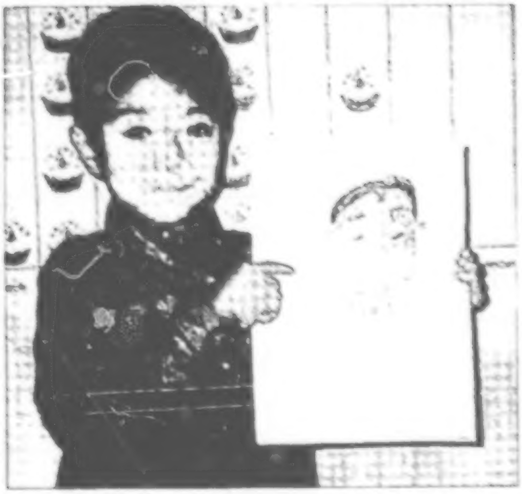

Figure 8. Adam's self-portrait during his participation in the process.

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Changes of Preschool Children's Social Strategy (Cognition) and Social Behaviors after Participating in a Cognitive-Social Learning Model of Social Skills Training

Dong Hwa Choi

Abstract

This study explored the effects of a cognitive-social learning model of social skills training on 4- to 5-year-old children with low peer acceptance. The cognitive-social learning model of social skills training aims to improve children's social behaviors through teaching effective cognitive social strategies and providing opportunities for children to practice social behaviors and monitor their social behaviors within a certain social context. Using three assessment methods—peer nomination, peer rating, and teacher's observation—34 children with low peer acceptance were selected for the study. Two groups—the social skills training condition and the teacher-attention condition—were formed based on random assignment. Children in the social skills training condition participated in the intervention, and children in the teacher-attention condition were given attention but not training. After the social skills training was completed, children's cognitive social strategies were assessed by observing their responses to certain social situations. Research findings indicated that children in the social skills training condition showed a significant improvement in maintaining positive play relationships with peers. In general, a significant correlation coefficient between social cognition and social behaviors was not obtained after the training.

Research Purpose and Questions

This study explored the effects of a cognitive-social learning model of social skills training on 4- to 5-year-old children with low peer acceptance. A primary purpose of this study was to investigate whether or not a social skills training based on the cognitive-social learning model could enhance the social behaviors of children who have low peer acceptance.

To carry out the purposes of the study, the following research questions were examined:

1. Do children show a significant improvement in their social cognition after participating in social skills training based on the cognitive-social learning model?
2. Do children show a significant increase in using the targeted social goals and skills when they interact with their peers after participating in social skills training based on the cognitive-social learning model?
3. What are the relationships between children's social cognition and social behaviors?

Theoretical Framework

A number of studies have supported the important influence of peer acceptance on the development and life adjustment of children. Peer acceptance is defined as the degree to which an individual child is liked or disliked by the members of his or her social group (Asher, Parker, & Walker, 1996; Bukowski & Hoza, 1989; Ladd, 1988). According to research findings, children who have low peer acceptance show low academic achievement (DeRosier, Kupersmidt, & Patterson, 1994; Pettit, Clawson, Dodge, & Bates, 1996; Wentzel, 1991), report feelings of loneliness (Cassidy & Asher, 1992; Ladd, Kochenderfer, & Coleman, 1997; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Parkhurst & Asher, 1992), and show life adjustment problems later on in adulthood (Parker & Asher, 1987). Thus, establishing and maintaining relationships with other children is often of the utmost importance during early childhood (Hartup, 1992).

As a way of helping children become socially competent, social skills training programs have been used for children with low peer acceptance to teach prosocial skills (Bierman & Furman, 1984). An underlying premise in a social skills training program is that children who have low peer acceptance do not have the social skills required to develop and maintain positive peer relationships (Asher & Renshaw, 1981; Coie, Dodge, & Kupersmidt, 1990; Hughes & Cavell, 1995; Ladd, Price, & Hart, 1988). According to this premise, if children have an opportunity to learn the appropriate social skills, they can improve their peer relationships and increase their level of adjustments (Furman & Gavin, 1989).

In addition, competent social behavior appears to depend on social-cognitive abilities such as interpreting social cues in constructive ways, knowing about socially approved social goals and strategies, and providing socially appropriate solutions to social situations (Mize, 1995). Children's ability to translate their social knowledge into action is especially important in executing successful social behaviors (Mize, 1995).

Thus, in the present study, the cognitive-social learning model was used to provide children with an opportunity to learn the concept of appropriate social goals and strategies, practice the learned social knowledge in a social situation, and monitor or evaluate their social behaviors (Ladd & Mize, 1983; Mize, 1995).

As target social behaviors, two social goals (entering an ongoing play group and maintaining positive play relationships) and three social skills (comments, suggestions, and nonverbal social skills) were used in the present study. Social goals and skills are two distinct components of social competence. Social goals are defined as personal goals that people want to achieve during interaction with other people or in a certain social situation. Social skills are defined as means to achieve social goals (Renshaw & Asher, 1983).

Data Collection and Methodology

As a part of the project examining the link between social skills training and cognitive and behavioral changes in children, data were collected from prekindergarten children enrolled at Thomas-Roque Child and Family Development Center. As a Head Start program, this center predominantly serves families of low socioeconomic status. All the children at the center, except one, were African American.

To select the subjects, all the children who had parental permission to participate in the research were assessed. For this study, children's peer acceptance was measured by two assessment procedures. First, sociometric assessments were conducted by having each child select three classmates with whom they would or would not like to play. Then the children were asked to rate their participating classmates according to degrees of liking. In the second assessment, classroom teachers were asked to observe children and complete the teacher's social skills rating form (Mize, 1984; revised with permission, 1999) for each participant. Thirty-four children who have low peer acceptance were identified as subjects. They were paired, then each pair of children was randomly assigned to either the social skills training condition or the teacher-attention condition.

To assess children's cognitive-social strategies and overt social behaviors, the enactive social knowledge interview (Mize, 1984; revised with permission, 1999) and social skills behavior observation form (Mize, 1984; revised with permission, 1999) were used, respectively. The interview is intended to assess social strategies that children would use in certain hypothetical situations. Using the revised enactive social knowledge interview form, children with low peer acceptance from both groups participating in this study were interviewed individually to explore their conceptions of appropriate social strategies in certain hypothetical situations.

Children with low peer acceptance scores who participated in this study were observed in their classroom by two trained graduate students who were unaware of the children's peer acceptance status or assignment to the two conditions. The social skills behavior observation form (Mize, 1984; revised with permission, 1999) was used to record social behaviors in a play context.

For the social skills training condition, a total of five social skills training sessions were administered by the researcher. The training program consisted of three components—instruction for concept learning, practicing skills performance through guided rehearsal, and fostering skill generalization through self-directed rehearsal. All stories that were used in the intervention consisted of scripts—a series of events occurring in certain situations such as a child's inappropriate social behaviors, a conflict situation caused by the child's inappropriate social behaviors, a way to solve the conflict, and the consequences of its resolution.

For each session, three social skills (comments, suggestions, and nonverbal social skills) were introduced to the children through each of the five hypothetical situations. In the first session, children learned how they could join an ongoing play group. In the second session, the children learned how they could initiate new ideas or activities. In the third session, the children learned how they could express a positive attitude or caring toward peers. In the fourth session, the children learned how they could share toys or materials. In the fifth session, the children learned how they could solve a conflict situation. The first session was designed to help children "initiate" positive social interactions with peers. The other sessions were intended to help children "maintain" positive social relationships with peers.

Children assigned to the teacher-attention condition served as controls for the effects of adult attention, peer pairing, and exposure to the experimental materials. A pair of children who were assigned to the teacher-attention group played for 30 minutes with an array of toys. During this time, the children were not instructed on how to behave or interact with their peers in socially accepted ways.

The post-tests were conducted within two weeks of the end of training. The social knowledge interview and social skills observation were conducted by two trained graduate students using the enactive social knowledge interview (Mize, 1984; revised with permission, 1999) and the social skills behavior observation form (Mize, 1984; revised with permission, 1999), respectively. The classroom teachers were asked to complete the teacher's social skills rating form (Mize, 1984; revised with permission, 1999). Each test was identical to the one used in the pre-test.

To compare group differences on social cognition and behaviors, the two-way repeated measures ANOVA was used. To examine the relationship between children's social cognition and social behavior, Pearson correlation coefficients were computed comparing children's social cognition change and their overt social behaviors. Since there was no significant difference in the preliminary t-test results from the pre-test data, only the post-test data were used to compute Pearson correlation coefficients.

Results

After the intervention was administered, the following findings were obtained:

1. Children in the training group showed an increase in maintaining positive play relationships with peers at $p < .01$, but no significant group difference was found in entering an ongoing play group.
2. Children in the training group showed an almost significant increase in using the targeted social skills (comments, suggestions, and nonverbal social skills) at the marginal level, $p < .055$. (Target social behaviors scale score consisted of "comments," "suggestions," and "nonverbal social skills.")
3. Children's social cognition did not show significant changes after the training.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate several important implications for social skills training programs for young children.

Social Goals

After the intervention, children in the social skills training condition did not show significant improvement in entry to an ongoing play group. Several explanations are possible. Primarily, a low incidence of children's entry behaviors was observed. Children's social behaviors were observed for 30 minutes in each test. Since successful peer-relationship maintenance behaviors were observed in this period of time, entry behaviors did not occur often enough to obtain a significant group difference.

Also, in the present study, the number of subjects was too small to obtain a significant group improvement in children's social behaviors. Data from 26 children (14 children in the social skills training condition and 12 children in the teacher-attention condition) were used for a group comparison. The number of children in each group might not be enough to reveal a significant group effect in the children's social behaviors. Another possible reason is that one training session teaching children how to initiate peer relationships was not enough time to obtain a significant difference between the groups of children.

In addition, entering an ongoing play group is difficult (Corsaro, 1981; Putallaz & Gottman, 1981). Children's entry behavior success is affected by the features of the social context, such as the size, familiarity, and social composition of the group being entered, and the personal characteristics of both the entering children and their hosts (Borja-Alvarez, Zarbatany, & Pepper, 1991; Putallaz & Gottman, 1981; Putallaz & Wasserman, 1989; Zarbatany, Brunschot, Meadows, & Pepper, 1996). Without considering the relationship between children's entry behaviors and other social factors described above, it is difficult to assist children's entry behaviors to an ongoing play group.

Regarding maintaining positive play relationships, findings can be interpreted as the effects of the cognitive-social learning model of social skills training. First of all, when children in the social skills training condition were compared to the children in the teacher-attention condition, they showed a significant improvement in their ability to maintain positive play relationships with peers after the intervention. In the social skills training program, four training sessions were administered to help children maintain positive play relationships with peers using comments, suggestions, and nonverbal communication skills. Compared to one session designed to help children enter an ongoing play group, four sessions of training provided more opportunities for them to learn how to maintain positive play relationships with peers.

In each session, children in the social skills training condition learned socially appropriate behaviors for continuing their play through concept learning, practiced their learned social skills in the training situation and in the real play situations, and evaluated or monitored their social behavior based on the trainer's and peers' feedback. Participating in these learning opportunities, children may develop the ability to understand others' perspectives and to behave in socially acceptable ways. Thus, a significant improvement in maintaining positive play relationships can be attributed to the intervention effects, which include modeling, teacher's and peers' feedback, and practicing new social skills.

Social Behaviors

Children in the intervention condition approached a statistically significant improvement in using the targeted social behaviors after the training. However, in using mature social behaviors, no significant difference was obtained between the two groups. Related to these findings, the characteristics of social behaviors that were assessed in the present study should be considered. In the social skills behavior observation, the targeted social behaviors scale score was composed of three social skills: comments, suggestions, and nonverbal social skills. On the other hand, the mature social behaviors scale score consisted of five social skills: comments, suggestions, nonverbal social skills, questions, and support.

According to the research findings, young children showed an improvement in using comments and suggestions after participating in the social skills training. However, they did not show a significant gain on the skills questions and support after the intervention. These findings suggest that questions and support may not have been operationally defined, appropriately taught, or lacked validity as target skills in an intervention for preschool children (Mize & Ladd, 1990a, 1990b). Therefore, in order to provide an effective social skills training program for young children, target social skills in an intervention should be selected by considering young children's social and cognitive developmental levels.

Relationship between Social Cognition and Behavior Changes

There were no significant positive correlation coefficients between interview responses and children's observed overt social behaviors in the social skills training condition and the teacher-attention condition. Several explanations are possible. First, a consistency of construct validity between three stories in the enactive social knowledge interview and operational definitions of social behaviors in the observation of social skill behavior should be considered. In the enactive social knowledge interview, children's cognitive strategies were measured when they observed others' play and had nothing to do, when their peer did not want to play anymore, and when they had a conflict situation with a peer. These stories were provided for children to measure their entry behavior strategies, strategies for maintaining positive play relationships, and resolution strategies of a conflict situation. In the social skills behavior observation form, operational definitions of social behaviors, including entry behaviors, maintaining positive play relationships, and other positive behaviors, were used to measure children's overt behaviors. A consistency of construct validity between two assessment instruments, the enactive social knowledge and the social skills behavior observation, should be achieved to determine the relationship between children's social cognition and social behaviors.

Second, failure to translate their social knowledge into action may result from children's lack of practice in executing learned social strategies and from their ineptness at performing social behaviors (Mize, 1995; Mize & Ladd, 1990a). Even though children practiced their social skills in the training contexts as well as in the play contexts in class, five sessions of training might not be enough time to use newly learned social skills in play situations.

Third, children may be unwilling to use appropriate behaviors and feel anxiety in trying new behaviors (Mize, 1995; Mize & Ladd, 1990a). Children in the social skills training condition were provided feedback, encouragement, or support from the trainer as a training procedure when they tried certain social behaviors and interacted with peers. Based on the trainer's assistance, children can evaluate and monitor their behaviors. It is likely that the trainer's presence, support, or feedback made it possible for children to have better social strategies, to behave socially more appropriately, and to feel emotionally secure. After the intervention, however, children had to behave according to their own decisions without the trainer's assistance. Changes in social contexts might prevent children from using the learned social behaviors.

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Dispositions as Goals in Early Childhood Education

Using Science as the Hub of an Integrated Early Childhood Curriculum: The ScienceStart!™ Curriculum

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Abstract

This paper describes the ScienceStart™ Curriculum—a science-based early childhood curriculum. The curriculum's major content goal is for children to develop a rich, interconnected knowledge base about the world about them. The curriculum's major process goal is to foster the types of intellectual development that characterize the preschool years, including children's receptive and expressive language skills, self-regulation of attention skills, and problem-solving skills. The paper describes the characteristics of the curriculum, implementation of the curriculum, and the effectiveness of the curriculum.

For the past 7 years, we have been involved in creating, implementing, and refining a science-based preschool curriculum. There are both content and process goals associated with this curriculum. In terms of content, the major goal is for children to develop a rich, interconnected knowledge base about the world around them. In terms of process, the primary goal is to foster and support the types of ordinary intellectual development[1] that characterize the preschool years.[2] These include receptive and expressive language skills, problem-solving skills, skills in self-regulation—particularly attention regulation—and skills in problem identification, analysis, and solution.

Thus far, the curriculum has been used primarily with low-income 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds who attend either Head Start or New York State Universal Pre-K programs. While the ScienceStart!™ Curriculum is highly effective in preparing low-income and second-language children for the demands they will eventually encounter in school, it is not designed as a compensatory or intervention program. Instead, it is very deliberately designed to be a holistic, developmentally appropriate program that can engage, support, and foster the development of all young children.

Goals and Assumptions Underlying the ScienceStart!™ Curriculum

The ScienceStart!™ Curriculum originates in an appreciation and concern for supporting the ordinary developmental achievements of the preschool years. In appropriate environments, intellectual development flourishes during early childhood. Unfortunately, however, many children find themselves in nonsupportive environments because of various family circumstances, particularly working parents' increased reliance on out-of-home care that is of poor or inconsistent quality. Appropriately implemented, the ScienceStart!™ Curriculum provides an out-of-home environment to foster ordinary development in the years between 3 and 6. This environment is beneficial to all preschool-age children.

The ScienceStart!™ Curriculum also originates in an assumption that primary school is the appropriate context for instruction in academic skills and that the preschool years are appropriately devoted to activities that provide opportunities to learn about the surrounding world and to acquire and practice the cognitive skills—expressive and receptive language, problem solving, self-regulation, and attention management—that are a part of ordinary development during the preschool years and that provide an essential foundation for later academic learning. This assumption also carries with it the following premises:

- Young children are active, self-motivated learners who learn best from personal experience rather than from decontextualized linguistic input (e.g., French, 1996; Nelson, 1996).
- Young children construct knowledge through participation with others in activities that foster experimentation, problem solving, and social interaction (Chaille & Britain, 1997).
- Young children should be allowed to exercise choice in the learning environment.
- Variability across children and the nature of preschoolers' general approach to learning mean that open-ended tasks are more appropriate in the classroom than are close-ended tasks.
- A classroom climate for young children that emphasizes achievement and evaluation can become highly punitive (e.g., Stipek, 1991) and thereby reduce or destroy children's inherent interest in learning.
- Children's social skills develop best when they have opportunities to learn and practice them in the context of meaningful activities (e.g., Katz & McClellan, 1997).
- Engaging and maintaining children's interest is a more effective means of supporting appropriate behavior than is emphasizing obedience.

The ScienceStart!™ Curriculum differs from other published approaches to early childhood education in terms of both its explicit emphasis on fostering the age-appropriate development of the cognitive foundations needed for later success in the school environment and its choice of content—a focus on scientific exploration of the natural, everyday world that incorporates artistic expression, literature, mathematical reasoning, writing, and center-based play.[3]

Essential Cognitive Foundations Selection

In determining the Essential Cognitive Foundations that would comprise the underlying goals of the ScienceStart!™ Curriculum, we were guided by three questions:

- What is ordinary development during the preschool years, and how can this development best be supported and fostered in a classroom context?
- What are the areas about which teachers and policy makers express concern regarding incoming students' lack of preparedness for school success?
- What are the areas of intellectual development for which research suggests that different home and child care environments may offer differential access to the environmental factors that support development?

In considering these questions, we identified language skills, self-regulation of attention, and problem-solving skills as the areas of development to be explicitly targeted by the ScienceStart!™ Curriculum.[4]

Language Skills

Receptive language and expressive language are two related but essentially quite different processes. In receptive language, in order for comprehension to occur, the listener must receive linguistic input and translate it into a mental representation. In expressive language, in order to be understood, the speaker must translate a mental representation into linguistic output.[5] Those who study language acquisition by infants and second-language learners are well aware that receptive language precedes and provides a necessary foundation for expressive language—basically people cannot meaningfully and generatively produce words, syntax, or discourse forms that they cannot also comprehend when they hear them used by others.

Notwithstanding the fact that receptive language precedes and provides the basis for expressive language, there is very little emphasis in the literature of either ordinary or compensatory preschool curriculum on ways to foster and support children's development of skills associated with receptive language. For example, the guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (Bredekamp & Copple, 1996) include many suggestions to enhance the development of expressive language skills but very few that would enhance receptive language skills. In one of the earliest and best-known intervention programs for low-income preschoolers, Bereiter and Engelmann (1966) focused primarily on children's expressive language; drills in which the children were expected to repeat what the teacher said were the primary form of receptive language activity.

For the most part, formal schooling involves learning through verbal input. Thus, school success is critically dependent on skill in translating linguistic input into mental representations. By age 4, most children are sufficiently skilled in the fundamentals of language that they can begin to use language not only for ordinary social interaction but also for transfer of content-rich meanings. Learning to use language (both receptively and expressively) to transfer content-rich meanings through language is a crucial component of formal education; the ability to use language in this way (both expressively and receptively) can be supported and developed during preschool through the use of language that precisely describes activities the child is observing or experiencing.

Like listening, reading is a receptive language activity. We suspect that many of the children who have difficulty with reading comprehension—despite success in learning to decode—would have similar difficulties with listening comprehension. That is, we suspect that many children are asked to *read* text that they would have difficulty comprehending even if it were presented orally. Thus, preschool programs that support and foster the development of receptive language will almost certainly contribute to later success in reading comprehension.

Given an adequate basis in receptive language, children need ample opportunity to express themselves verbally. Although close-ended or "known-answer" questions may have a place in the classroom, they are not a good way of fostering children's expressive language skill. Children learn conversational skills by participating in conversations with more skilled language users, and they learn to express themselves verbally through attempts to describe their thoughts and ideas to a supportive listener.[6]

As will become apparent when the ScienceStart!™ Curriculum is described in more detail, extensive opportunities for children to acquire and practice receptive and expressive language skills are built into each day's activities. Language experiences differ across families in terms of how closely they match the types of language demands that will be encountered in primary school (e.g., Heath, 1983). However, virtually all children are capable language learners when they are immersed in an environment rich in opportunities to acquire and practice language skills. By the preschool years, virtually all children are capable of using language not only for basic social interactions but also to express and comprehend complex meanings. We reject the assumption that in order to succeed in school low-income children need a different type of preschool language environment than do middle-class children. Rather, we start with the assumption that a preschool environment rich with meaning and language will be beneficial to all children. Whether children are low- or middle-income, and whether or not they are below average in the language skills needed for school success, they will all find such a preschool environment a place to develop and practice their language skills while enhancing their knowledge base and developing related skills in attention regulation and problem solving.

Self-regulation of Attention

The number and increasingly young age of children being diagnosed and medicated for attention problems worries many educators, physicians, and child advocates. The question is raised as to whether the children truly suffer from an attention disorder or whether the classrooms and other environments to which they are expected to adjust are inappropriate for young children.

The medical model of attention disorder assumes that the individual child is responsible for attending to the environment and that failure to do so reflects a disability within the individual. This perspective does not recognize the role that the environment may play in eliciting and supporting attention and does not recognize that skills in attending develop over time and, like many other cognitive skills, will most likely benefit from the support and involvement of other people in the environment.

On the one hand, developmental psychologists do not yet know very much about the ordinary developmental processes and stages of attention regulation. On the other hand, many skilled teachers have a variety of ways of engaging children's attention. This ability indicates that attention can be socially constructed and that the environment can affect the extent to which children will attend (French & Song, 1998). One hopes that identifying the development of attention regulation skills as a primary goal for the preschool years will allow us to draw on the expertise of these skilled teachers to outline techniques that all teachers can use to foster the development of children's facility in regulating their own attention and in turn to reduce the incidence of primary school children being diagnosed as having an attention disorder.

The foremost means of fostering attention in preschool is to have an interesting environment and meaningful activities. Major underlying premises of the ScienceStart!™ Curriculum are that (1) engaging children's interest and active participation is paramount and an essential prerequisite to learning, and (2) "wait time," during which children are expected to wait passively for a turn at an activity, should be minimized. The ScienceStart!™ Curriculum supports the development of attention regulation through activities that engage young children's interest for extended periods because these activities are hands-on, open-ended, and responsive to children's desire to explore and learn more about the everyday world around them.

Some of the ways that we have seen teachers in other programs foster the development of attention regulation among preschoolers include:

- *Reading aloud:* Virtually all children love to be read aloud to and to be invited to actively participate in reading. This activity fosters the development of both receptive language and attention regulation. Many children enjoy hearing the same story repeatedly; this enjoyment may be related to their emerging attention and linguistic skills—becoming more familiar with a particular text allows children to practice the attention-related skills of comprehension and prediction.
- *Extended and complex child-guided investigation:* The Project Approach (e.g., Katz & Chard, 1989; Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1993) is open-ended and can accommodate children with a variety of interests and a variety of skill levels. This approach allows children to set their own goals within the wider context of a group activity; their own goals are likely to be highly meaningful and motivating for them, thus leading to high levels of engagement and attention regulation.
- In the typical Korean preschool classroom, teachers frequently insert quick routines such as finger-plays into an ongoing lesson or activity; these finger-plays recall children's attention without the teacher disrupting the lesson to scold individuals (French & Song, 1998; French, 1995).
- The structure inherent in the High/Scope "plan, do, review" sequence provides a familiar routine to structure children's activity; this framework can then be drawn on to guide and self-regulate attention.

Problem-solving Skills

A simplified version of the cycle of scientific reasoning (reflect and ask, plan and predict, act and observe, report and reflect) permeates the daily activities of the ScienceStart!™ Curriculum. This cycle is initially introduced and guided by the teacher, but as the school year progresses, the children take increasing amounts of responsibility for its instantiation. The Vygotskian perspective (e.g., Bodrova & Leong, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch & Hickmann, 1987) that children learn higher-order thinking skills through watching others use them and co-participating in their use is widely accepted. It is not always easy for teachers to meet the challenge of making their almost automatic thinking processes apparent to children. Articulating the planning phase of the cycle is especially important because this is a phase that even the best teachers typically do "in their heads." Yet, the creation and evaluation of a plan are critical components for solving a problem, and the related skills are too important for us to hope that children discover them on their own.

We find that, with teacher support, children are able to transfer the reasoning cycle to resolve problems that arise during peer play. For example, one girl ran to the teacher to complain that the other girls in the housekeeping area would not let her play with the dolls. Rather than intervening with the other girls, the teacher asked the girl who felt left out what she thought she could do (plan) and what she thought would happen if she did take that course of action (predict). After discarding a couple of plans, the girl confidently walked into the housekeeping area, announced, "I'm the grandmother, and I have to give the baby a bath now," and was immediately given one of the dolls.

As teachers working with the ScienceStart!™ Curriculum support children in planning and predicting during the course of science explorations, they do not comment on the accuracy of the children's predictions, either before or after an activity is carried out. They welcome all predictions and emphasize that comparing outcomes to predictions is an excellent way of learning, regardless of whether or not the original prediction was correct. This approach is taken both because it accurately reflects the scientific attitude and because we feel it is extremely important during the preschool years to avoid making children overly concerned with getting the "right answer." Instead, teachers using the ScienceStart!™ Curriculum are urged to emphasize the open-ended nature of wondering and learning. Wondering leads to problem solving and feelings of competence and self-esteem in learning.

Knowledge Base

A fourth component of what we consider to be the essential cognitive foundations for school success is a rich, interconnected knowledge base about the surrounding world. Listening and reading comprehension involve relating the new input to what is already known. Children with a richer, more interconnected knowledge base will generally comprehend more than children without such a knowledge base. The knowledge base also plays a key role in supporting higher-order intellectual activities such as drawing inferences and making predictions (e.g., Bodrova & Leong, 1996).

Many preschool programs lack any sort of "instructional" content and are built around free play and art activities. Other preschool programs offer content that lacks coherence from day to day—on different days of a single week in February, the first author's 5-year-old studied presidents of the United States and their birthdays, Valentine's Day and St. Valentine, and dinosaurs. Many preschools use a theme approach that is intended to provide coherence and in-depth learning. However, as implemented, the theme approach is often not a topic that supports coherence and integration but a label that arbitrarily brings together unrelated items and concepts (for example, "Red Week" or "M Week").[7]

Just as they are biologically prepared to learn language and to learn to walk, children are biologically prepared to learn about the surrounding world. Without apparent effort, they process personal experiences to create rich mental representations that serve as a guide in understanding and interpreting subsequent experience (e.g., Nelson, 1986; Nelson & Gruendel, 1981). In the course of mundane, daily life, many children have rich opportunities to learn about the surrounding world. However, many children lack either a wealth of experiences or the language to talk about the experience.

To draw a strong distinction to illustrate this point, imagine the child who never visits a farm, the child who visits a farm in silence, and the child who visits a farm with an adult who is eager to talk about the purposes of farming, the animals and plants that appear on a farm, and the life cycle of these animals and plants—an adult who invites the child's questions and comments during the experience, and who then talks with the child after the visit and encourages the child to tell someone else (dad, another teacher) about the experience. The first child lacks the experience of visiting a farm; the second child has the experience and doubtless has mental representations of that experience; and the third child has the experience, mental representations created by both the experience itself and by the input/explanations offered by the adult, and the language to express and recall the experience and the adult input. Children who spend the preschool years in environments that offer a variety of experiences and provide the language to describe, interpret, and recall the experiences will be better prepared for school than will children who spend the preschool years in environments where little language is "wrapped around" daily experience.[8]

Once convinced of the importance of helping children develop a rich knowledge base, how would one decide the question of "about what?" At one level, daily life—especially if supplemented with extensive linguistic input—provides ample opportunity for learning a great deal. A variety of approaches used in successful preschool programs also offer a great deal for children to learn—projects, author studies, and emergent curriculum are all open-ended approaches that support the creation of a coherent knowledge base.

The decision to use science as the basis for our curriculum derives in large part from watching children themselves. As we began introducing activities such as color mixing, mapping, and exploring the properties of air into preschool classrooms, teachers began to express amazement at how focused and attentive the children became; the teachers were especially impressed by the engagement of children who often presented behavior problems or had difficulty in "settling down." As noted above, children are biologically prepared to learn about the everyday world; our observations indicate that they are also very excited about opportunities to do so.

Characteristics of the ScienceStart!™ Curriculum

As we have formulated the ScienceStart!™ Curriculum in greater detail over the past few years, we have established several guiding principles. First, we decided that the science content would involve only topics that children could personally experience or perceive. Second, we decided to build in coherence, such that each day's science activities would build on the activities of the day before and provide a foundation for the activities of the following day. Third, we decided to create a highly integrated program by making each day's science activity the core of the rest of the day's activities. For example, if mixing primary colors is the day's science activity, there might be:

- a selection of books about color in the reading area, with a book such as *Mouse Paint* or *Little Blue, Little Yellow* read aloud as a means of introducing the color mixing activity;
- only red and yellow paint at the easel, with a suggestion that children try to create a variety of shades of orange and some adult support for the mathematical concept of proportion;
- net aprons/capes made of primary colors in the housekeeping area, with a suggestion that children try layering them to create new colors; and
- flashlights, color paddles, and cellophane in primary colors at the science table.

Implementation

In practice, a classroom that is implementing the ScienceStart!™ Curriculum looks very similar to most high-quality American preschool classrooms. There is a large-group time that includes a period of "read aloud," choice time in the same sorts of activity centers found in most preschool programs, outdoor play/large motor activity, and mealtime or snacktime. We have operated the program with a lead teacher, assistant teacher, and 21 children, as well as working in smaller groups. Key features of the ScienceStart!™ Curriculum that are found in other high-quality programs include high levels of parent involvement and individualized planning and goal setting for students. What distinguishes the ScienceStart!™ classroom from others is the content of the curriculum, the interrelation between large-group activities and the rest of the day's activities, and the cycles that structure the implementation of the curriculum.

The curriculum is structured by two recursive cycles. The teacher guides the children through four phases as they experience an extended unit such as "air," "light," or "measuring ourselves." These phases are similar to those that would occur in a classroom that followed an emergent curriculum model. They include exploration, formulating questions, following the questions, and a culminating experience. The amount of time devoted to each of these phases is adjustable depending on children's and teachers' interests. A unit on air might last three weeks, with the first three days devoted to exploring air from a variety of perspectives, a couple of days devoted to supporting children in formulating observations and questions about their explorations of air, a week or more carrying out investigations that build on the observations and address the questions, and a few days planning and carrying out a culminating experience—perhaps having a party that included serving baked meringue and planting a wind garden, or perhaps making kites and taking a field trip to fly them. These complex culminating experiences can take on the characteristics of the familiar Project Approach. They have a variety of subcomponents that require planning and implementing; children can contribute to the efforts of the larger group as they find a part of the activity that fits their particular interests and skills.

The second recursive cycle is the simplified cycle of scientific reasoning that the teacher leads the children through during each activity. The four phases are "reflect and ask," "plan and predict," "act and observe," and "report and reflect." Reflections at the end of one activity may lead to another activity, thereby providing coherence from one day to the next.

During large-group time, the teacher reads aloud a book that provides a context for introducing and discussing the daily science activity. After introducing the day's topic, the teacher invites children's input, and together they plan how to explore the topic. The science activity is carried out—with varying amounts of student participation—during large-group time, and it is then made available for revisiting during choice time, most likely with adult support. During both large-group and choice time, the teacher and children follow the cycle of scientific reasoning. Following large-group time, children choose which activity area to begin in, then move among areas. There is variation across teachers and days in terms of how much the teacher directs children toward specific activity areas. At some point during the day, a report about the day's investigations is prepared. Critical components of the report phase include reflecting on or talking about the activity and representing it in a way that can be shared with others. This representation may take many forms, including charts and graphs, lists and narrative descriptions, drawings, and performances. The report may be an intrinsic part of the large-group time (e.g., tasting three different types of apples and charting students' preferences), it may be an individual creation that results from the activity itself (e.g., a sun-catcher made with overlapping colored cellophane), it may be a compilation of individual creations (e.g., a class book for which each child contributes a page of dictation or drawing, a poster with handprints from each class member), or it may occur during a separate period of teacher-guided reflection and assume the traditional form of writing on chart paper that can be posted.

Effectiveness of the Curriculum

We are taking several approaches to documenting the effectiveness of the ScienceStart!™ Curriculum:

- Classroom teachers are interviewed/debriefed on a regular basis, and it is highly obvious to them that the curriculum is effective. Children are highly engaged. They make reasonable predictions and compare these to what actually happens.
- Classroom observations support the teachers' reports of students' high levels of engagement and participation, as well as their reports of few behavioral problems.
- Parents report satisfaction with the program, change their expectations for their children's learning in positive ways, and, once their children have moved on to primary school, frequently return to tell us about their success. Parents who have had older children in other preschool programs indicate a strong preference for the ScienceStart!™ Program.
- Pre- and post-tests[9] on the central concepts of units show two important types of learning: children are learning the "facts" of science (e.g., to make a large shadow bring an object close to the source of light; to make the shadow smaller, move the object away from the light), and their emerging theories of science concepts are increasingly well represented in, and therefore

accessible to, language. To assess children's science learning, we have created storybooks in which the protagonist, *Curi the Bear*, faces a problem that can be solved by the application of the concepts emphasized in the units. *Curi* solicits help from her "classmates" in a series of questions that differ in the degree of contextual support they offer the child. These questions permit us to distinguish between children whose knowledge is so well established in language that they can use it to think about situations (i.e., to interpret and reply to questions), and children who can access their knowledge to describe a picture but could not use it to support inference and prediction. Consistently, pre- and post-evaluations show that children know significantly more science facts following instruction, and significantly more children are able to use their knowledge to support thinking. Our children's progress is noteworthy because it supports the claim that the content is developmentally appropriate and because it shows how easily low-income children, frequently considered to be demographically at risk for school achievement, can learn complex, abstract concepts.

- Standardized measures of language show children making statistically significant gains in receptive and expressive grammar and vocabulary. Of the measures we use, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test is perhaps the best known.[10] This measure of receptive vocabulary correlates strongly with many achievement tests (Williams & Wang, 1997) and is a good predictor of school success. Our data, collected over 5 years, show that children entering the program, whose average chronological age was 4 years 4 months of age, had an average receptive vocabulary of children age 3 years 11 months. Six and a half months later, these children had the vocabulary of a child of 4 years 11 months. That is a 12-month gain in 6-1/2 months and shows the children performing at age level at the end of the program. We want to reiterate that this vocabulary was picked up incidentally, without direct teaching, in the course of participation in a language-rich classroom.

We are currently delineating an explicit match between the New York State Standards for PreK and the ScienceStart!™ Curriculum so that we can offer teachers insight into how to achieve these standards in a developmentally appropriate and engaging learning environment.

Looking Ahead

With support from the National Science Foundation, we are currently working to find ways to support teachers in adopting the ScienceStart!™ Curriculum. Development of the ScienceStart!™ Curriculum began during the 1996-1997 school year, and this year (2000-2001) is the first year that it is being piloted with teachers who did not play a major role in its development. We are finding that even teachers who volunteered to adopt the curriculum struggle with putting aside familiar approaches to the pre-kindergarten classroom and adopting instead the coherent, integrated ScienceStart!™ Curriculum. It appears that our efforts over the next few years will most likely be devoted to finding effective and efficient mechanisms for professional development. We are optimistic because our efforts at bringing about teacher change are helped considerably by the changes they see in their students as the curriculum brings hands-on investigations of the everyday world into the classroom.

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Notes

[1] By using the adjective "ordinary" we mean to emphasize that we are referring to intellectual abilities that emerge without direct instruction during the course of everyday life. At a basic level, virtually all children acquire these abilities. However, the abilities are also context sensitive in that their initial acquisition and the level to which they are eventually developed are affected by an individual child's opportunities, social interactions, and physical environment.

[2] It is our perspective that focusing on the development of intellectual skills is appropriate and possible only in environments that also meet children's physical and social needs. In our classrooms, we emphasize appropriate social interactions and community building, and we strive to create an environment that maximizes children's interest

and engagement. We find that when children are engaged with content they care about, they are much less likely to engage in inappropriate social behavior.

[3] We are sometimes asked how we can focus on "science" when "everyone knows" that language and literacy are the essentials for school readiness. We point out that language and literacy are aspects of the cognitive process of *making reference*. That is, they must be *about* something. Focusing on science content provides a meaningful, goal-directed context for enrichment of language and literacy skills, as children work with content-relevant texts and develop context-relevant reports.

[4] Some readers are likely to wonder why we do not target "learning to read" as an essential cognitive foundation. In order to learn to read, children must first have an opportunity to develop the appropriate foundations of receptive language skill in creating meaning from incoming language, a rich knowledge base to support comprehension, and the ability to self-monitor understanding and to take steps to correct the situation when understanding lapses. Without these foundations in place, it will be virtually impossible for children to move beyond simple decoding. With these foundations in place, they can easily learn to read in an appropriate primary school environment. Too early an emphasis on reading and phonics instruction can be not only developmentally inappropriate but also damaging to the child's sense of herself or himself as a competent, autonomous learner.

[5] Of course, this is a bare outline of what happens and ignores other components of both speaking and listening, including accessing the appropriate knowledge base to support comprehension, adhering to pragmatic expectations for speaking, and so forth.

[6] Here we would define a supportive listener as one who is genuinely attempting to understand what the speaker is saying and who asks questions to help the speaker express herself clearly. Preschool-age peers can certainly engage in conversations with one another, but supportive adults are also very important in helping children learn to express their thoughts through language (e.g., French & Pak, 1995).

[7] One Kodak scientist told us that she taught complex science topics in her son's preschool once a week. When asked how she decided what to teach, she said she had to find a topic that went with the "letter of the week" but that she sometimes "cheated" by using an adjective with the right letter to introduce the topic she wanted to introduce—e.g., "windy days" to introduce the concept of "weather" during "D-week."

[8] Unfortunately, our personal observations in day care and preschool programs suggest that the norm is using language primarily for control rather than for enriching and extending children's experience. Even teachers who are concerned about children's language development often translate this concern into concern about children's *expressive* abilities and may not themselves use a great deal of language to describe, explain, and simply converse about experiences.

[9] These pre- and post-tests are designed for each unit. The surface form consists of a narrative that is administered as a shared book reading, where children are asked to help answer questions raised by Curi, the main character in the narratives. The underlying structure of the assessments is a rubric that assesses children's level of understanding of the concepts that underlie the curriculum unit, ranging from no or very little understanding to sufficient understanding to express the concept in language without reliance on pictorial representation.

[10] The PPVT-R has recently been renormed to reflect the current U.S. population and the experience of ethnic minorities. For this discussion, PPVT-R raw scores were transformed into PPVT-IIIA scores.

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Developing the Disposition to be a Reader: The Educator's Role

Debbie Noyes

Abstract

Most very young children seem to have a disposition to explore books—that is, they "naturally" have an interest in books. As children grow, some children maintain this disposition, learn to read early, and become lifelong lovers of books; however, some children lose the disposition or do not develop it at all, and they never experience the joy of the written word. This paper looks at the educator's role in developing and sustaining this disposition in young children. It explores the characteristics of a child who has a disposition to be a reader, what can be learned from literacy-rich home environments where children learn to read "on their own," and which classroom strategies might discourage the disposition to read and which strategies might enhance or help develop the disposition to be a reader.

A Disposition to Read

What is a disposition to read? First of all, what is reading? Is it the ability to say words that are written on a page? *World Book Encyclopedia* (Farr, 1992) defines reading as the act of getting meaning from the printed or written word. According to McGee and Richgels (1990), children are novice readers when they intend to get meaning from written symbols even when those symbols are highly familiar signs, labels, and logos. Reading is a language process that emerges simultaneously with writing, speaking, and listening and is a process that actually begins in infancy (Strickland & Morrow, 1989).

"A disposition is a tendency to exhibit frequently, consciously, and voluntarily a pattern of behavior that is directed to a broad goal. It is possible to have the skills and lack a taste for or habit of using them. Similarly, knowledge can be acquired without having the disposition to use it" (Katz, 1993, p. 1). Dispositions are usually learned through modeling. Children develop dispositions by observing them in other people and by having opportunities to use them.

Many young children have an interest in books, stories, and pictures—the foundation of a disposition to be a reader. Neuman, Copple, and Bredekamp (2000) write: "Beginning in infancy and continuing throughout childhood, children may learn from those around them that in language and literacy there is value, enjoyment, and sheer power. If they do not develop such an interest in reading and writing—an eager desire for initiation into print's mysteries and skills—children's progress toward literacy is uncertain. When the going gets tough, they may drop out of the game. While eagerness does not guarantee success, motivated children are far more likely to persist and succeed than are children who see no point in all the hard work of learning to read and write" (p. 28). There is good reason for educators to be concerned about aliteracy, the lack of desire to read.

Aliterate children can read, but they tend to avoid the activity. Aliteracy seems to reinforce itself. Children who do not read do not develop their reading skills. Children, like most of us, dislike doing things they do poorly, so they tend to read less and less. This reinforcement is especially true in the classroom, where the child who does not read sits with skilled readers and continues to feel more inept about reading.

Aliteracy is potentially as alarming as illiteracy. Educators need to look at factors such as their attitude toward children, the way children learn, and the curriculum. These factors may have an enormous impact on creating lifelong positive attitudes about reading.

Literacy-rich Home Environments

Many children come to kindergarten already reading, and their parents claim that they "must have taught themselves to read." These children love books, and their interest seems to never end. What is it about these children or their homes that gives them the love for reading at such an early age?

If we took a look in these homes, we would see reading material for a variety of purposes—books and magazines for pleasure (and adults who read them) and materials for information such as recipes, *TV Guide*, and instruction booklets. We would also see adults who value reading and who enjoy reading with their children.

One of the most important things children can learn at the beginning of their literacy experiences is that reading is a pleasurable activity. When children are read to early in their lives, they play with books as a preferred and frequent activity. Book reading is one of the closest activities parents and children share. Children nestle in Dad's lap or lean over Mom's arm while they take part in this activity. The special feelings that come from this closeness of parents and children are associated with books. It is no wonder that some children will sit alone and look at books far longer than they will with their other toys (McGee & Richgels, 1990).

Judith Schickedanz (1999) says that a major contribution of story-reading experience is the pleasure that it can bring. To enter into the world of stories on their own is something that many children want to do once they have experienced the joy that stories bring. Therefore, experience with stories can build a positive attitude toward reading and can help children develop a strong desire to learn to read.

All children bring their experiences with them to the reading process. Children from homes where story reading, conversation, and ideas are valued will have a broader base of experiences to bring and therefore have an advantage when learning to read. Children with limited experiences generally have more difficulty learning to read. Current research indicates that the factor correlating most highly with a child's learning to read easily in primary school is whether she or he has been read to as a young child (Gottschall, 1995). As educators of young children, we must not forget that some children will need that one-on-one story reading, as well as other important experiences, when they come to school. Many children are coming to school with the love of reading already developing. Others will need to have experiences provided in the classroom to lay the foundation for lifelong reading. Barclay, Benelli, and Curtis (1995) found that child care settings are capable of developing and promoting children's literacy in some of the same ways found in literacy-rich homes.

Is it possible to replicate within a kindergarten or elementary classroom those elements found in homes of early readers? Absolutely. Here are only a few ideas:

- Provide a comfortable place for children to explore books independently or in small groups (include pillows, carpet, or other soft areas for book browsing).
- Provide interesting reading materials for children on a variety of topics and of various reading levels.
- Plan a story-reading time for the class each day (adult reads aloud to whole class).
- Provide functional reading materials (recipes, phonebook, game instructions, words to songs and fingerplays, classroom rules, etc.).
- Plan an individual reading time each day (SSR—Sustained Silent Reading, DEAR—Drop Everything And Read, etc.).
- Allow children to talk to each other about books they are reading.

- Let children see adults reading for pleasure and to get information.
- Provide resource materials so children may find answers to their questions in books.
- Display pictures or posters of children and adults enjoying reading.
- Use labels and other environmental print in the classroom.
- Read to children individually with the child on your lap or sitting nearby.
- Allow children to read or listen to the same story over and over and over.
- Talk to children about what you are reading.
- Allow children to dictate words, sentences, or a story.
- Provide tape-recorded stories for children to listen to.

Emotions, Attitudes, and Learning to Read

There seems to be growing evidence that emotions are closely related to learning to read. In addition to the emotional bond that is formed when a young child and an adult read books together, the attitude of the elementary school teacher and the emotional climate of the classroom seem to be important variables. "What a teacher believes about teaching, learning, and the nature of children will expand or limit the opportunities for her children to achieve their potential" (Mills & Clyde, 1991, p. 54). There is much more to effective reading instruction than the actual instruction itself and the multitude of materials that sometime make up a "reading program." What may be more important is the emotional climate a teacher creates in the classroom (Greenberg, 1998).

Gottschall (1995) notes that it is the intimate sharing of books between a child and a caring adult (as found in literacy-rich homes) that helps the child grow to love and bond with books. It seems that children of all ages love the intimacy of reading with an adult. If experiences with books are enjoyable, and if these experiences occur under especially nurturing conditions, the feelings associated with books and reading are likely to be highly positive (Schickedanz, 1999). The development of positive attitudes towards books and reading is the beginning of a disposition to be a lifelong reader.

Educators of young children can have a great impact on the development of this disposition. The climate of the classroom and the attitude of the teacher can either encourage this development or keep it from developing at all. A recent article in *Young Children* (Greenberg, 1998) suggests that a warm and calm climate is optimal for children learning to read. Some children will survive no matter what. But other children really need that calm and accepting classroom atmosphere. Greenberg writes, "Personally, I've never known a five-, six-, or seven-year-old who requires cold relationships and a cold classroom climate to thrive and learn optimally" (p. 69). Teachers need to be keenly aware of the emotional atmosphere of the classroom and especially how it affects the process of reading. Every child needs to feel successful at some point, even the slow-to-catch-on readers. Reading can be taught in a way that all children feel intelligent and competent, or it can be taught in a way that children feel stupid and incompetent. Learning to read can be highly charged with emotions. Successful readers feel happy, confident, and powerful. Not-so-successful readers feel anxious, angry, and inferior.

Children who have not had an opportunity to develop a disposition to read may struggle when traditional reading programs are started. They are scared to admit that they don't understand. They are afraid to ask for help, fearing ridicule from peers and reprimands from teachers. Unnecessary facts and rules, along with frequent put-downs, are swimming around in their heads, making it impossible to see reading as enjoyable. For some children, these classroom experiences may feel like emotional torture. Excess pressure and stress have many negative effects on adults. We certainly don't want that stress for children. Making children feel frightened and anxious is not necessary to teach them to read. From time to time, children will have fears, anger, and feelings of inferiority. It is a tragedy if as teachers we are exacerbating or giving children those feelings in the process of teaching them to read (Greenberg, 1998).

Curriculum for Lifelong Readers

World Book Organized Knowledge in Story and Pictures ("Reading," 1929) discusses reading instruction: "The reading lesson should be the most interesting period of the day, and the teacher who has acquainted herself thoroughly with her work and with her pupils will have no difficulty in making it so. Some pupils have a pronounced distaste for arithmetic, others seem to have no aptitude for science; but any child may be made to feel a keen interest in his reading lesson if the correct methods are pursued" (p. 4939). Reading instruction should be interesting. A child who has a disposition to be a reader is *interested* in reading (getting meaning from print). Therefore, the curriculum should include books and other reading material that are interesting to the children.

Many reading programs focus on practice and drill of isolated skills. Authentic reading has been replaced with test-like activities. Children from literacy-rich home environments may have already learned to read by the "lap method." They know what reading really is. They are probably bored by paper-and-pencil worksheet activities. But there are other children who have not been read to and do not have a working definition of what reading really is. These children may become confused and lose confidence by the amount of time spent on these skill-oriented exercises (Kamii, 1990). The acquisition of these skills does not guarantee that they will be used or applied. In fact, the instructional processes by which some skills are acquired may actually damage the likelihood that they will be used or applied in the future. Katz (1987) reports that research on the long-term effects of various curriculum models suggests that the introduction of academic work into the early childhood curriculum yields good results on standardized tests in the short term but may be counterproductive in the long term.

Most teachers state "creating lifelong readers" as a goal. But, unfortunately, when some teachers prioritize their reading objectives and skills, this goal is put in the "if there is time" category. This approach will have long-term consequences—students who do not or will not read (students who are not interested in reading anything). Fostering a disposition to be a reader is hardly a "frill activity." If students choose not to read, there will be no opportunities for them to practice and apply (in meaningful contexts) all the carefully drilled skills that have been conveniently isolated and labeled within those workbook pages (Thomas & Moorman, 1983).

Educators must think more seriously about their long-term goals for children. If we intend for them to become lifelong readers, then we must stop concentrating on the drill-and-practice method that improves test scores in the short term but sacrifices children's creativity, self-confidence, and pleasure of reading in the long term (Kamii, 1990). Teaching practices can take into account ways to strengthen the disposition to be a reader. The reading curriculum should include but not be limited to the following:

- *Time:* Children need time to explore reading materials, look at the print, look at the pictures, turn the pages, experience all kinds of books, magazines, etc.
- *Modeling:* Children need to see adults reading for pleasure, using reading to find information, talking about reading, sharing what they have read with others.
- *Listening:* Children need to listen to adults read to them. Children of all ages love to hear stories read aloud. This activity should not stop just because they can read on their own.
- *Talking:* Children need opportunities to talk to each other about things they have read. They need to talk about words they don't know. They need to help each other figure things out.
- *Experience:* Children need experiences to which they can relate the things they read.
- *Writing:* Children need opportunities to explore writing in different ways (remember that writing is emerging also).
- *Opportunities for expression:* Children need opportunities to creatively express their feelings about reading and the things they are reading about.
- *Variety:* Children need interesting material that is relevant to their lives. Provide a variety of topics, styles, and materials.
- *Success:* All children need to succeed, although it may not happen at the same time or in the same way for all children.

Conclusion

Children who have the disposition to be readers obviously do better in school. Mills and Clyde (1991) state that confident and secure children who are interested in print are experienced problem solvers and decision makers. They are usually reflective about their own learning and will perform well in a variety of settings.

Students who have the disposition to be readers enjoy reading, find reading to be beneficial, and seek out reading. In order for students to seek out reading, Thomas and Moorman (1983) list the following four principles that need to be internalized:

- For me, reading can be an enjoyable and informative activity.
- I am an "okay" reader.
- For me, reading can be a good way to spend some spare time.
- I would like to learn further strategies to become more efficient in learning from what I read.

There is obviously much more to be learned about dispositions and the reading process. However, there seems to be sufficient data to support further investigation and thought about the educator's role in helping children develop the disposition to be readers.

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Affecting the Future: The Role of Appropriate Scaffolding in the Development of Social Competence

Catherine M. Kearn

Abstract

Young children exhibit aggression in order to achieve their goals, to respond to their developing understandings of ownership. The *Code of Ethical Conduct* for early childhood educators includes the commitment to support children's development, including helping them to learn to work cooperatively. The types of interventions that children experience affect the long-term quality of their responses to others. This paper proposes the merging of Katz's work on children's social competence with Vygotsky's concept of scaffolding. Katz offers nine principles of practice for enhancing social competence. Vygotsky introduces us to the child's private speech as a tool "to transfer problem-solving knowledge and responsibility from the adult to the self." He found that scaffolding promotes private speech through which children realize they can answer their own questions and learn how to regulate their own behavior. Research tells us about effective strategies that give us a platform on which to build. Learning to put them into practice is an ethical responsibility of every person in the early childhood field.

> *Thirteen-month-old Eileen spotted a ball and with a big smile followed it as it rolled across the floor. Jean joined in pursuit of the ball. Teacher Karen smiled at the children and asked, "Can I play with you?" She encouraged one, then the other, to throw the ball and "go after it." Eileen and Jean giggled as they raced in toddling fashion across the room.*

Karen had seen an opportunity to help the children like each other more. She had turned a potential conflict into a fun cooperative exchange. She modeled assertive words: "Can I play with you?" rather than creating a situation of helplessness and conflict by saying something like: "Eileen has the ball. Jean has to watch and wait."

> *Four-year-olds Sue, Mary, and Arlene are building a block house complete with bedrooms, garage, and driveway. Joe watches intently, then approaches and asks: "Can I build with you?" In chorus, the girls respond, "no." Joe respects their no but continues to stand nearby. When the girls start to move props into the house, Joe picks up a stop sign and places it at the end of the driveway. Arlene sharply reminds him, "We told you no." Joe responds, "But I just wanted to help," and walks away.*

The three girls had staked out their domain. Joe respected their "no" but not without a second assertive try. Teacher Ann was busy with another group and missed the interaction. When told about the incident, she expressed amazement at Joe's respectful response. She had modeled the language for him on numerous occasions and was delighted to know he had used it.

She had succeeded in scaffolding one level of acceptable social behavior. Joe had used words instead of forcing his way in. He had respected the "no" response.

What can we gather about the effects of this transaction? Would Joe be able to sustain this behavior if consistently shut out? He had walked away—but he had walked away alone. The three girls continued to shut out others who approached them, even hitting another girl several times with a block. How could the teacher scaffold their behavior so others would not resent and react to their exclusivity? What could the girls learn? How could the teacher help these children like each other more instead of less?

Because there were a minimal number of blocks, this situation was an opportunity to help children deal with the less-than-adequate resources. The teacher needed to do more than say, "You need to find something else" or "The girls were here first." By using directive speech, the teacher fails to assist children in developing self-regulation. By not intervening effectively, the teacher teaches them that the biggest person can decide what happens without consulting anyone else. It also supports the making of arbitrary rules. Instead, the teacher might have acknowledged that all five children wanted to build and then helped them figure out why it might not work.

Aggression vs. Assertiveness

How does this situation relate to teaching children social competence and assertiveness rather than promoting aggression? Aggression involves actions meant to harm others. The actions must by definition be intentional, and they must be meant to harm. Assertiveness, on the other hand, means expressing one's own needs and feelings, defending one's rights while respecting the rights and feelings of others.

During the first year of life, infants are incapable of aggression because they have no causal understanding. Between the age of 1 and 2, as toddlers begin to develop a sense of ownership, they also begin to develop aggression. The child wants to protect her territory. Protecting toys—territory—is intentional. Those who oppose or threaten that ownership will be the targets of aggressive behavior.

A child's need to protect her territory is developmentally normal. Whether it develops into lifelong aggression, assertiveness, or helplessness depends on the interventions of the adults in the child's life. Aggression as a way of life is learned through direct teaching of antisocial behaviors or the failure to teach alternatives to aggression. Children model their behavior on significant adults as well as peer behavior and television images. Research supports the perception that aggressive children have consistently been subjected to harsh and inconsistent discipline or viewing of violent TV programming—direct teaching of aggressive behavior. As early childhood educators working with children who are in the formative years, we have the opportunity and responsibility to teach those alternative modes of behavior. We need to be proactive, not just reactive. If we fail to teach alternatives to aggression, we are tacitly approving antisocial behavior and aggression.

Social Competence

Section I of the *Code of Ethical Conduct*—Ethical Responsibilities to Children—states: "We are committed to support children's development, respect individual differences, help children learn to live and work cooperatively…." (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1997, p. 2). Teachers of toddlers and preschoolers have a unique opportunity to scaffold children's social competence and reduce the risk of lifelong aggressive behaviors.

In *Fostering Children's Social Competence: The Teacher's Role,* Katz and McClellan (1997) discuss nine principles of practice. One of these principles is "optimum teacher intervention promotes social competence." According to this principle, the teacher needs to be aware of what is happening. The teacher needs to be available when a child needs assistance. The teacher also needs to allow children to attempt to solve their own potential conflicts. In the vignette above, the teacher was not aware of the subtle aggressiveness of the girls. Joe needed support to maintain his assertiveness. The teacher could have acknowledged his attempts, allowed him to express his feelings about being excluded, and offered him some alternative strategies. The teacher could also have given the girls an opportunity to develop strategies for relating to Joe other than completely shutting him out. Perhaps they could have told him that when their house was finished, he would be invited to a party. She could have modeled other words, such as: "Joe, right now there are three of us, and because the block area is so small and we have so few blocks, we think it would be hard for more of us to work together here." She could have suggested they tell Joe: "We are building the house. Would you like to plant some trees in the yard? You could be the landscape man." Either of those comments would have helped Joe and the girls like each other more and would have taught them negotiation skills.

Because no intervention was forthcoming, the girls became aggressive when a fourth girl, Brenda, attempted to join them. Brenda did not ask, as Joe had done. She walked into the block area. Sue used a block to hit her three times in the abdomen. Brenda became a helpless victim, standing speechless until Mary pushed her and she fell on the block structure. At that time, the teacher became aware of the incident. When asked what was happening, Sue and Mary immediately blamed Brenda for knocking down the blocks. Brenda was never given the opportunity to explain. Here was an opportunity to scaffold the social competence of everyone by asking some key questions, by making sure all parties had an opportunity to speak. Questions might have included:

- Brenda, what could you have said to Sue and Mary to let them know what you wanted?
- Sue and Mary, how could you have included Brenda or if you did not want to include her right now, what could you have said?
- Brenda, when Sue hit you with the block, what could you have said to her?
- What do you think would make you happy?

The teacher might have suggested that each party draw a picture of the incident. They could have dictated a sentence about how they would have liked the encounter to end. She might have suggested that the girls start over and think about other things they could do or say so no one felt excluded or was hurt. It is equally important that Brenda learn to assert her rights. This assertiveness is the first stage in standing up for oneself and others as an advocate. It also is the beginning of work for social justice.

The teacher's optimum intervention at this point would have been a bridge to negotiation for the children to use in future encounters. In addition, the teacher could have used other strategies suggested by Katz: (1) Be respectful of children's feelings and (2) Help children cope with adversity. Both Joe and Brenda were disappointed about not being included. They needed to have an adult not only affirm their feelings but also make the distinction between tragedy and disappointment. It is normal and ok to be disappointed; not having the opportunity to build with the blocks today is not a tragedy. It is an opportunity to experience and understand delayed gratification.

The concern raised by the lack of intervention is that Brenda will continue to become increasingly helpless and that the other girls will achieve their goals by excluding others and using aggressive behaviors when they feel those goals are threatened. It is at this age, when the skills of negotiation and assertiveness are developing, that intervention would be most successful.

In his paper, Riley (1999) traces aggression as part of normal development. As with all areas of development, there are individual differences. Some preschoolers are more aggressive than others. He tells us that before age 4 the children who are most aggressive are also the most positively sociable. "They are well liked by other children, cooperate well, know how to get along in pairs and in groups" (p. 2). By age 4 or 5, competent children are learning alternatives to aggression. Those who have learned nothing better than hitting are in danger of developing a lifetime habit of socially unacceptable aggression.

Riley (1999) quotes a study by Leonard Eron. Children were studied at age 8 and periodically thereafter until age 30. He divided the 8-year-olds into groups of low, medium, and high aggression using the peer nomination method. Notable is the finding of a strong correlation between peer-nominated aggressive behavior at age 8 and adult criminality. He goes on to report on the work of Dan Olweus who studied schoolyard bullies and their victims. He found that about 7% of children consistently bully others and about 9% are consistently bullied. He found that bullies had a higher likelihood of later criminal convictions and the victims had an increased likelihood of later social-emotional and mental health problems. He also found that teachers did little to prevent bullying until he taught them how to intervene. He helped them engage the children in discussions about their responses to bullying. Teachers and children faced the question: Is it ok to do nothing?

Scaffolding

Vygotsky talks about the importance of private speech in the self-regulation of behavior. Children learn private speech only after hearing an adult talk through a problem. "…children's learning cannot be separated from the task in which it is taking place…an essential element of scaffolding is that the participants in social interaction negotiate, or compromise by constantly striving for a shared view of the situation" (Berk & Winsler, 1995, pp. 27-28). First, the adult remains engaged in the activity to provide support. As the adult adjusts the amount of help or instruction, she allows the child to ask and answer the questions. Working with an adult who talks a child through a task without assuming control leads to the competence of the child. The child learns to transfer problem-solving knowledge and responsibility from the adult to the self (Berk & Winsler, 1995, p. 45):

> When adults use questions and strategies to guide children and to help them discover solutions, they elevate language to the status of a primary problem-solving tool. This use of language by adults leads children to use speech to solve problems.… Research reveals that the relation of private speech to children's behavior is consistent with the assumption that self-guiding utterances help bring action under the control of thought. (Berk & Winsler, 1995, p. 46)

Supplying children with appropriate words to use is an important tool. In *Starting Small,* the teachers related how "calling it as they see it" was very effective. When the boys were poking at the girls' bodies and making fun of them, the teacher suggested, "If someone is harassing you, say 'Don't harass me.'" Calling "If you don't give it to me, you can't play" a threat instead of teasing helps the children see what it really is. Teasing is often acceptable. Threats never are. Using terms like these was effective. The teacher conveyed the message that the behavior was unacceptable, not something that would be tolerated or given tacit approval. At Cabrillo College's Child Development Center in Aptos, California, the word "exclude" carries a special stigma. There is a basic rule: You can't exclude anybody because of who they are. Yet there are legitimate reasons for excluding: undesirable behavior is the main one (Teaching Tolerance, 1997).

Helping children verbalize what it is they want to do is the beginning of negotiation. Teacher Lourdes tells how she uses the Peace Table: "The Peace Table is somewhere you feel comfortable, where you can talk to your friends if they do something that makes you sad or mad.… It's a friendly place." To help the children learn to use the Peace Table, Lourdes invents role-plays, first with puppets, then with the children. When this scaffold is in place, she invites children in conflict to join her at the Peace Table. They start with identification of the problem and then move to the solution: "What do you think you could do to be happy?" Soon the children invite one another to the table without the teacher and even act as mediators of conflicts between others.

This teacher's use of the Peace Table is an example of scaffolding. It also involves using personal speech for self-regulation. The children are learning impulse control as they learn to use words before and possibly instead of action. At the Peace Table, they speak aloud to one another. Vygotsky said, "What the child can do in cooperation today, he can do alone tomorrow. Therefore, the only good kind of instruction…must be aimed not so much at the ripe as at the ripening functions.… we must consider the upper threshold as well; instruction must be oriented toward the future, not the past" (Berk & Winsler, 1995, p. 104).

Slaby, Roedell, Arezzo, and Hendrix (1995) tell us that recursive cycles of behavior develop because they work. The behavior is effective: the child succeeds in getting what he wants. If a child succeeds in getting what he wants by being aggressive, he will use that strategy again. If he attains it by being assertive, he will use his negotiation skills again. Slaby et al. list several ways young children respond to an initial failure to get what they want: compromise, agreeing under a condition, offering a counterproposal, providing a justification for refusal, requesting an explanation, using a threat or physical force. The choice they make not only affects the outcome, it affects the way the children regard one another later and the method they will use in the next conflict (pp. 100-102).

Katz and McClellan (1997) discuss the need to intervene to break this cycle:

> Young children cannot break a negative recursive cycle by themselves.... Evidence suggests that, once established, differences in preschoolers' social competence and peer acceptance remains well into the elementary years and beyond.... Without intervention, children entering new social situations readily assume the status and behavior they held in previous groups.... Based on research, it is reasonable to assume that the younger the child, the more easily parents and teachers can help him shift from a negative to a positive cycle. (p. 56)

Learning to solve social problems in an effective and acceptable way involves many skills. Children need competent teachers who take the time to scaffold their learning of these skills:

- Listen carefully: give all parties an opportunity to describe their perceptions.
- Gather information.
- Define the problem.
- Set a goal: how can we respect the rights of each person involved?
- Generate alternative solutions: what else can we do?
- Anticipate consequences: what will happen now?
- Choose the best solution.

These steps can be followed at the Peace Table or in a less structured discussion, first with teacher assistance, then between children. A negative recursive cycle can be transformed into a positive cycle of negotiation, assertiveness, and peaceful solutions.

Closely related to the principle of breaking recursive cycles is the idea that any meaningful relationships require content. Adult and child or child and child must have something to relate about. If the main content of contact with a child is undesirable behavior, no nurturing relationship can survive. If the adult can address the behavior and then move on to topics of interest and value to the child, that adult is assisting in the breaking of the recursive cycle. If the only attention a child receives is related to undesirable behavior, then that behavior is strengthened. If the teacher starts to talk about Tom's cap collection or brings in various types of caps she has collected to share with him, they can talk about caps instead of his aggressiveness in the dress-up area. If the teacher asks Jenny to share her interest in books, Jenny may learn to talk instead of withdrawing to a book when conflict arises. If Tom is frequently involved in pushing others in line because he wants to be first, the teacher could use the Peace Table to discuss the behavior and then find opportunities to talk to Tom about his interest in race cars.

Looking at the principles of practice that Katz and McClellan describe in *Fostering Children's Social Competence* (1997, pp. 49-61), we see a common thread. The teacher's competence and interaction with the child is of paramount importance:

- Children's feelings deserve respect.
- Social competence is culturally defined.
- Social difficulties provide opportunities to teach.
- Social behavior develops in recursive cycles.
- Direct communication enhances adult effectiveness.
- Meaningful relationships require content.
- Optimum teacher intervention promotes social competence.
- Adult expectations shape children's characters.
- Teachers' interactions with children model social competence.

Katz suggests other strategies not specifically addressed above. Among those are

- Communicate openly with parents.
- Establish authority and credibility; avoid offering choices when you don't really offer a choice; avoid threats.
- Accommodate individual differences: avoid comparisons that imply disapproval.
- Establish and invoke ground rules.
- Word questions carefully so they are not confusing.

Conclusion

Scaffolding children's growth in any area means knowing the child's developmental status. Scaffolding children's growth requires understanding when and how to "provide tasks at the upper end of the child's current abilities (in the zone of proximal development), as well as patient, encouraging assistance and feedback coordinated with the child's self-regulatory efforts (that is, scaffolding)" (Berk & Winsler, 1995, p. 48). To affect the future is to apply scaffolding to children's learning of social competence.

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Preparing Teachers for the Project Approach

Learning through Projects in Early Childhood Teacher Education

Lorraine DeJong

Abstract

Research suggests that project learning has great potential to foster a comprehensive knowledge base for teachers. This paper describes the rationale for weaving project learning into early childhood teacher education programs and describes how teacher educators can effectively implement the strategy in their curriculum. Included is a discussion of how projects support brain-based learning research and how projects support specific learning goals in early childhood teacher education. These include specific knowledge, skills, dispositions, and feelings that are cultivated and supported by this approach. The paper offers suggestions, with examples, for using projects throughout the teacher education program. These include introductory course experiences that students may have prior to selecting teaching as a major and advanced experiences students could have once they have made a commitment to early childhood teacher education. The paper describes a specific design for implementing projects in any early childhood teacher education classroom. Steps include providing initial orientation, brainstorming, investigation of the topic, developing the final products, and student assessment.

As we enter into a new millennium, faculty in early childhood teacher preparation programs find themselves faced with two major challenges. First, there is the struggle to articulate a professional knowledge base for early childhood teacher education that will best prepare educators to face the demands of teaching in an increasingly dynamic, technological, and diverse society. Simultaneously, there is the challenge to design instructional models that will effectively help teachers *acquire* the common core of knowledge and abilities that they will need to teach young children now and in the future. In this article, I would like to share how project-based learning can assist early childhood teachers to acquire the needed knowledge base that includes professional skills, attitudes, and dispositions that will strengthen their effectiveness as teachers of young children.

Research suggests that project learning has the potential to foster a comprehensive knowledge base for teachers (Caine & Caine, 1997; Damon, 1995) that supports recently established guidelines and standards for teacher preparation programs (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), 1995; NAEYC, 1996; National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), 1997). Further, projects have the potential to increase student motivation for learning (Meece & McColskey, 1997). Because of their power to achieve multiple goals in teacher preparation, it is important to weave project learning into the total fabric of a professional education program.

What Is a Project in Teacher Education?

Long-term projects in teacher education are authentic tasks related to children, schools, and/or teaching that actively engage learners over an extended period of time (Damon, 1995; Katz & Chard, 1995; Meece & McColskey, 1997). In a project, small groups of students choose and

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then participate in an in-depth investigation of a topic that is of interest and relevance to them. Throughout the assignment, students pose questions of what they would like to learn, then seek answers to their questions through numerous investigative activities. They examine relevant empirical research and other professional literature. They observe, interview, and interact with many individuals inside and outside the classroom. Students engage in brainstorming sessions with peers and with the instructor and create final products to share with classmates and other students and professionals outside the classroom. Throughout the project, the instructor serves as a coach who oversees the students' learning by selecting appropriate tasks, diagnosing problems, providing challenges, offering feedback (Damon, 1995; Katz & Chard, 1995), and assisting students in their collaborative efforts.

Whereas several scholars have documented the pedagogical rationale for using projects in education for all students (Blumenfeld et al., 1991; Damon, 1995; Meece & McColskey, 1997), and others have provided a rationale with strategies for using projects with children in early childhood settings (Katz & Chard, 1995; Chard, 1998; Elliott, 1998; Katz, 1994), little has been written on how project learning specifically contributes to the development of future teachers in early childhood education, and how projects may be incorporated into the conceptual framework of an early childhood teacher education program. In the remainder of this article, I will describe: (1) how projects support recently reported brain research on human learning and recently established knowledge base standards for early childhood teacher education; (2) suggestions for infusing projects within a total early childhood teacher education program; and (3) specific strategies for implementing project work in early childhood teacher education classes, including ideas for student activities and assessments.

Projects and Brain-based Learning

In *Education on the Edge of Possibility,* Caine and Caine (1997) draw on recent research from cognitive psychology and the neurosciences to propose an instructional theory that is derived from brain-based learning principles. A listing of these principles is shown in Table 1. In their theory, the learner is transformed from being an absorber of information to one who interacts dynamically with it. When curriculum and instruction support brain-based principles, learning is maximized.

Project learning supports and reinforces many of the principles emphasized in brain-based learning. One principle posits that everyone's brain is *uniquely organized* and that students will express individual differences through their learning styles, talents, and abilities. Projects offer students the opportunity to develop and apply their own set of attributes by

Table 1

Brain-based Learning Principles (Caine & Caine, 1997, p. 19)

Principle 1: The brain is a complex adaptive system.
Principle 2: The brain is a social brain.
Principle 3: The search for meaning is innate.
Principle 4: The search for meaning occurs through "patterning."
Principle 5: Emotions are critical to patterning.
Principle 6: Every brain simultaneously perceives and creates parts and wholes.
Principle 7: Learning involves both focused attention and peripheral perception.
Principle 8: Learning always involves conscious and unconscious processes.
Principle 9: We have at least two ways of organizing memory.
Principle 10: Learning is developmental.
Principle 11: Complex learning is enhanced by challenge and inhibited by threat.
Principle 12: Every brain is uniquely organized.

engaging them in a variety of flexible investigative experiences. Students select their own topics, design many of their own learning tasks (including field experiences), decide how and by whom tasks will be completed, and report findings that are the most important to them in ways that are most agreeable to their learning styles.

When students participate in projects, they engage in frequent *social interactions*. This is important now that we know that the brain is a *social brain*. Throughout a project, students have multiple opportunities to exchange information with a partner, classmates, instructor, and others at the university and within the community.

Project learning supports the principle that the brain simultaneously *perceives and creates parts and wholes*. Not only do projects provide opportunities for students to learn specific knowledge and skills, they encourage students to see the "whole picture." This is because much of what is experienced through projects is connected to real-life situations in the home, school, or community that are complex and multifaceted. In project learning, students are less prone to use their brains to memorize "right answers" about information, but are challenged instead to reorganize information in ways that will encourage them to remember how to apply specific knowledge and skills in variable contexts, such as with children in schools (Caine & Caine, 1997, p. 167).

Project learning supports a student's continuous search for meaning through the *construction of patterns*. Because a project allows students to choose the subtopics and questions they are most interested in learning about, their search for meaning is driven by their own past experiences, purposes, and beliefs. Further, what students ultimately learn from participating in a project is a personal consolidation, rather than a summation, of their experiences.

Complex learning related to young children's behavior, instruction, and schools is enhanced through projects. This is because the work of independently figuring out what one wants to know and then going out into the real world to seek out answers is often quite challenging. However, threats, which could potentially inhibit complex learning, are greatly minimized. For example, the threat of grade anxiety (common among college students) is reduced because students have an entire semester to plan and organize their project tasks, they share the workload with other students, and they receive frequent feedback from the instructor. Further, multiple methods of assessment, that offer students many opportunities to improve, are used for evaluation.

Finally, project learning encourages students to use both *conscious* and *unconscious processes*. As students participate in meaningful investigative tasks in real school settings, they take in knowledge through all of their senses. Students are directly aware of some of what they learn; however, other understandings and/or insights may not be realized until much later. Only after reflecting with others (i.e., partner and/or instructor) and by oneself throughout the project, do students construct their own personal knowledge from their experiences. For many, there will be the realization that they learned much more than they expected and certainly much more than they would have through less active and less personally meaningful strategies.

Projects and Learning Goals in Early Childhood Teacher Education

Projects not only support brain-based learning, they also provide a mechanism for those of us in teacher education to help students achieve *multiple goals* in teacher preparation as outlined in standards for initial certification of teachers (NAEYC, 1996; NBPTS, 1995; NCATE, 1997). These include the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and feelings that are necessary for successful interaction with young children, families, and other professionals inside and outside the classroom.

Knowledge

We know that effective teachers of young children possess a keen understanding of child development, teaching and learning theory, curriculum development and implementation, family and community relationships, assessment and evaluation, and professionalism. Participating in projects allows students to gain knowledge in several of these domains. Students read relevant professional literature on an important topic in early childhood, collaborate with one another and with the instructor, and engage in fieldwork. Field experiences offer students many opportunities to directly observe and interact with young children, school personnel, and families in naturalistic settings related to their topic of interest. Because a project encourages students to discuss their investigative interests and experiences, and to collaborate on a final product, they acquire, clarify, and enrich data from a variety of venues. Moreover, as students choose and seek out community persons and organizations having expertise with their topic, they gain professional knowledge of the community resources available to assist children and families. Lastly, project learning shows participants how to integrate information in meaningful ways so that they will hopefully be able to create similar learning opportunities for their own students.

Skills

Effective early childhood educators demonstrate a range of social, academic, communication, and self-management skills that will allow them to work effectively with young students, parents, colleagues, supervisors, and members of the community. Projects offer students multiple opportunities to practice collaboration and cooperation as they work with a classmate to brainstorm investigative questions, plan and participate in field experiences, discuss observations, and develop final products. As students struggle to pace and coordinate the numerous investigative tasks among themselves, they practice self-management skills. Throughout the project, it is important for faculty to schedule regular progress meetings. They allow instructors to monitor how the project is progressing and help students to practice defusing conflicts that may periodically exist between partners before they adversely affect an investigation. Other skills that are practiced and strengthened, especially during fieldwork activities, include student observation, questioning, and interview skills. As they design final products, students often have many opportunities to practice the skills of oral and written communication, teaching, and technology.

Dispositions and Feelings

Effective teachers are expected to feel confident with their teaching assignments, comfortable with the children in their classrooms, and respected by colleagues, supervisors, staff, parents, and the community. They are expected to possess dispositions that will enable them to work through difficult challenges and stay committed to their profession. Some of these dispositions include curiosity and interest in learning, self-awareness, intrinsic motivation, humor, enthusiasm, helpfulness, perseverance, high expectations, challenge seeking, and respect and appreciation for another person's time, contributions, and efforts. Many of these feelings and dispositions are strengthened during project work because students have much autonomy over what topic they will study, what directions their investigation will take, what fieldwork they would like to participate in, and what final products to develop. Through individual reflections of each field experience, students gain self-awareness of their personal interests, values, insights, competencies, and challenges. Through regular consultation with their peers and the instructor, confidence and perseverance in their work are fostered. Finally, as students observe and interview children, parents, teachers, and other adults within the community, they grow to appreciate and value the contributions made by many to the education of young children and the interdependency of these relationships. The following reflection of one early childhood education major who participated in project learning during her teacher education training summarizes how projects have the potential to foster multiple learning goals in teacher education:

> The project experience was great for me because I learned so much more than I expected from the field research and from my partner. I particularly enjoyed working with a partner on the project because although we divided the workload and worked separately on different aspects of the research, we came together to plan our strategies and class presentation. This is a good lesson for our future work with other teachers in areas such as team curriculum planning and team teaching. I not only learned a lot about my topic and those of my classmates, I now find I am an advocate not only for my own project topic but also for using projects in teaching.

Suggestions for Using Projects within the Teacher Education Program

Introductory Course Experiences

It is not uncommon at many universities for undergraduate students to begin their professional preparation in an early childhood teacher education program by participating in courses in child growth and development. At some universities, these courses may not be limited to early childhood education majors. There may be students seeking other education certifications and/or seeking majors from other departments. Students who enroll in these courses often come with varied interests, backgrounds, and levels of motivation. In my experience, infusing projects into the curriculum helps to make introductory child development courses more meaningful for everyone. This has often contributed positively to undecided undergraduate students choosing early childhood education as a major.

Implementing projects during the early stages of the teacher education program is effective because they allow all students a chance to explore and pursue important personal learning goals while at the same time strengthening their knowledge base of issues related to child development. Students considering early childhood education as a major can choose topics that are of specific interest to them within the field of early child development. Examples of topics chosen by different types of undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory growth and development course are provided in Table 2.

Experiences within the Early Childhood Education Major

As students progress within their professional training programs, projects must continue to provide a meaningful context for learning, especially if we hope that our students will one day implement the Project Approach with their own students in early childhood classrooms. Methods courses are designed to help students become more knowledgeable of appropriate

Table 2

Examples of Project Topics of Students in an Introductory Teacher Education Course in Child Growth and Development

Committed Early Childhood Education Majors	Other Education Majors, Non-Education Majors, Undecided Students
Grouping students in the ECE classroom	Homelessness and child development
Gender identity development in early childhood	Adoption and child development
Music education and early childhood development	
Drug-exposed children in the ECE classroom	Understanding the children of teenage parents
Retention in ECE	Children with ADHD
Competitive sports and early child development	Divorce and child development
Dealing with death in early childhood	Father's role in child development
Child abuse in early childhood	Violence and child development
Bullies in early childhood	Guidance counselors in the elementary school
	Home schooling and child development
Young children and television	Year-round schooling and child development
Friendship in early childhood	Effective schools for children living in poverty
	Japanese vs. American childhood education
Young children's understanding of money	

ways to design curriculum and instruction for young children. What better way to help students learn about brain-based learning models of early childhood curriculum and instruction (i.e., constructivism), than by engaging them in one? Examples of project topics chosen by students enrolled in a senior level course in early childhood curriculum and instruction are summarized in Table 3.

To enrich the project learning experience for both students and faculty, instructors may choose to engage in *mentoring relationships* with students. In a mentoring relationship, instructors actively explore and participate in project investigations along with their students. The instructor continues to model and support literate approaches to solving rich conceptual problems (i.e., how to get the knowledge or do the tasks that are of interest) and provide scaffolding to help student teams perform their investigative tasks. However, in addition, faculty work with students to brainstorm subtopics for investigation, assist in the development of investigative questions, solicit resources, read new research and/or literature, and participate in and reflect on novel fieldwork experiences.

Table 3

Examples of Projects of Early Childhood Teacher Education Majors Enrolled in an Advanced Methods Course

- Understanding the Multi-age Early Childhood Classroom (K-2)
- Incorporating Technology in the Early Childhood Classroom
- Inclusion in the Early Childhood Classroom
- Designing Outdoor Nature Playgrounds for Early Childhood Programs
- Incorporating Drama in the Early Childhood Classroom
- Head Start Programs in Early Childhood Education
- Community Services for Young Children in Early Childhood Education
- The Role of the Parent Educator in Early Childhood Education
- Inclusion of Linguistically Diverse Students in the Early Childhood Classroom
- Understanding Child Abuse in the Early Childhood Classroom
- The Role of Aides and Assistants in the Early Childhood Classroom
- The Homeless Child in an Early Childhood Classroom
- Adopted Children in the Early Childhood Classroom

This adaptation of the project learning design not only has the potential to enhance learning for students and faculty, it has been my experience that it also has the potential to strengthen the personal relationship between preservice teachers and their college supervisors. This is because students form stronger identifications with those persons who share rewarding and challenging life experiences with them. We already know that the cooperating teacher plays an important role in the development of a beginning teacher because of their shared experiences in a classroom. Strong personal relationships between university faculty and students created from shared personal experiences before student teaching can likewise be salient to novice teachers. This is because students are likely to feel comfortable seeking assistance and support from faculty they are close to during times when they are struggling to address challenging situations and consolidate their professional beliefs and commitments.

When students collaborate with faculty on projects, there are other benefits. They experience firsthand what it feels like to work with other education professionals. Through direct observation of their instructors, students see that learning remains a lifelong process for all educators. Both experiences can lead to a stronger knowledge base for young teachers as they begin their professional roles in schools.

Implementing Projects in the Early Childhood Teacher Education Classroom

In the final section of this article, I would like to share how I have implemented the Project Approach with college students. The design is adapted from the three-phase model described by Katz and Chard (1995) in their book, *Engaging Children's Minds: The Project Approach*.

I. Getting Started

Orientation

To provide as much time as possible to explore topics of interest, students are oriented to their project assignment during the first week of classes. During this initial week, students choose a topic of interest, become acquainted with a classmate with a similar interest who will work with them for the duration of the term, and receive a timeline with recommended dates for completing project tasks. These tasks include initial brainstorming about the topic, formulating questions about the topic, working on library and Internet searches, participating in fieldwork experiences, meeting as teams with the instructor, and developing final products. It is important to establish reasonable timelines for students to complete project tasks in conjunction with periodic progress reports because they help keep everyone actively focused on their investigations (Harmin, 1994).

During the initial orientation, students are encouraged to generate topics of interest to them. In the event students in advanced classes have some knowledge of their student teaching placements, they may choose projects related to specific teaching issues and/or situations of interest at their schools. Once students are paired with a partner who shares a similar interest (regardless of knowledge), they are ready to begin the next task of phase one.

Brainstorming

After orientation, students within each team brainstorm with one another what they already know about their topic and what they think they might like to learn. The initial brainstorming conversations create interest about what is to be read, studied, and investigated. They help to chart a course for the students' study and decide the scope of the investigation. They may be revised at any point throughout the investigation as students generate new questions of interest and develop new understandings from their experiences. By the end of the first or second week of the term, students complete a partial K-W-L and a web or concept map (Katz, 1994) on their topics. The web is often revised, as students become more involved in their investigative activities. An example of a project web two students developed on the topic of multi-age classrooms in early childhood education is provided in Figure 1.

Sample Project Web

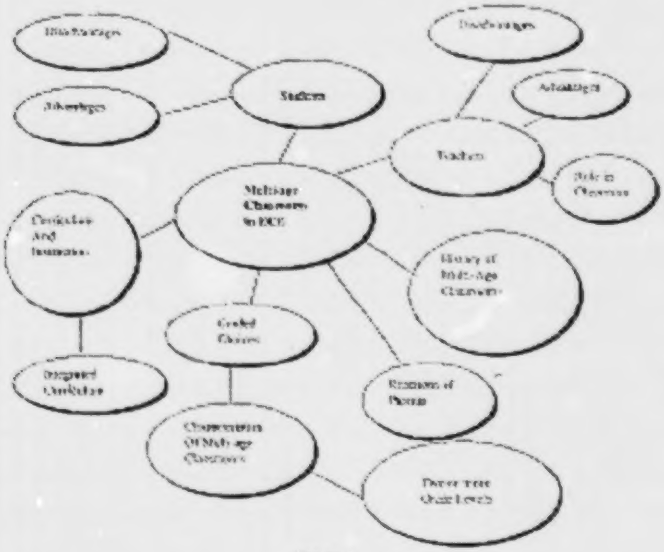
Disadvantages
Students
Advantages
Disadvantages
Advantages
Teachers
Role in Classroom
Multiage Classrooms in ECE
Curriculum And Instruction
History of Multi-Age Classrooms
Graded Classes
Integrated Curriculum
Reactions of Parents
Characteristics Of Multi-age Classrooms
Grade Levels

Figure 1.

II. Investigating the Topic

Viewed as the "heart and soul" of project work, phase two consists of the direct investigation of the topic through a variety of tasks and activities. These may include searching the library and Internet, viewing videos and other expert presentations, conducting interviews and surveys of children and/or adults, observing individual and/or groups of children, and/or directly participating with children and/or adults. Depending on the topic and the personal project interests of students, field experiences often lead students into schools, district offices, community agencies, local businesses, and individual homes. At least twice during the term, students have a conference with the instructor to discuss specific project directions, questions about their investigations, fieldwork issues, revisions to web diagrams, final products, and any other personal concerns they might have regarding their work on their projects.

III. Developing the Final Products

Near the end of the term, students present their findings to classmates and others. Student teams lead a 20- to 25-minute multimedia presentation for their classmates that summarizes what they learned through their investigations. Students may decide to show clips from videos (which some students may develop), use computer visual displays (i.e., PowerPoint presentations), give demonstrations, administer short class pretests, show pictures and/or reference materials, share results of surveys, play audiotapes, use overheads, or perform role plays, and so forth. One requirement that I have is that both partners be equally involved in the presentation and that they distribute to classmates a two-page handout that highlights the team's major investigative efforts, findings, and bibliographic references. A second requirement is for students to submit a notebook that summarizes their project findings. Their notebook contains a reference list of 15 to 20 current library/Internet resources on their topic and a paper (five to seven pages) that analyzes what they learned from their readings and field research (L in the K-W-L). Finally, each student submits a personal reflection paper on his or her project learning experience (shared with instructor only). As a culminating activity, many students share their findings with other classes, teachers, and principals. Students may also share their findings with the broader professional community by placing their project reports on the World Wide Web, and/or presenting their findings at professional meetings and conferences.

Assessment of the Project

To help students develop a sense of competency and efficacy, I have found that students need clear goals, expectations, and feedback for their project assignments. An example of how projects may be evaluated is shown in Table 4. The project evaluation instrument supports brain-based research and includes multiple ways for students to demonstrate competence (Meece & McColskey, 1997, p. 42). By distributing the evaluation instrument early in the term, along with a suggested timeline for completion of specific tasks, students have several opportunities to clarify items and issues related to the evaluation. Up until the completion date, students may submit samples of project work for the instructor to review and may redo tasks as needed to reach the acceptable standards for each. In my experience, this assessment approach minimizes grade anxiety and enhances student intrinsic motivation.

Conclusion

Although project-based instruction is not a new idea in education (Dewey, 1956; Kilpatrick, 1926), it has never been systematically developed for effective use within programs of early childhood teacher education. Clearly, learning through projects can be both vital for teacher competence and meaningful and motivating for students. Recent research now suggests that it is not only an effective learning strategy for young children, but is also an especially useful strategy to foster dispositions, motivations, and professional habits that are as important as knowledge to the success of beginning classroom teachers. The time is right to make project learning an integral part of early childhood teacher education.

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Table 4
Project Evaluation Instrument

K-W (from K-W-L) (5 points)
  Items of interest described; prior knowledge indicated
Web (5 points)
  Comprehensive: Range of subtopics identified; specific subtopics investigated highlighted

Investigative Questions (5 points)
  At least 5 clearly stated questions per observation/interview/field experience
Logs and Reflections of Investigative Field Experiences (20 points)
  At least 5 field experiences clearly documented and individually analyzed

References (10 points)
  At least 15 current professional resources (5 may be Internet resources) listed using APA guide

Class Handout (10 points)
  Two-sided, legible, accurate, and informative to share with class
Project Summary (20 points)
  Thorough and comprehensive (5-7 pages); appropriate references cited; personal reflection of project experience included
Oral Presentation (15 points)
  Timed within limits; incorporates multimedia; both students actively involved
Professionalism (10 points)
  Final products submitted on time; notebook typed and well organized; progress appointments with partner and instructor consistently kept
Total (100 points)

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Teacher Development through Project-based Learning: The Hollywood Elementary Story

Kathleen W. Glaser

Abstract

Inspired by Lilian Katz's lectures and books, the staff of Hollywood Elementary School in southern Maryland embraced Katz's philosophy of developmentally appropriate programs, project learning, and multiage grouping. This paper describes Hollywood's journey as a school community to implement these strategies, discussing the multiage organization of the school, the project-based curriculum that takes advantage of the natural environment around the school, the role of the Arts, teachers' professional development and innovation, and the tangible and intangible results of implementing the changes.

The story of Hollywood Elementary School in St. Mary's County, Maryland, is a story of teachers individually and together seeking to create a meaningful, child-oriented, effective learning environment. A schoolwide focus on teachers' implementing project learning as a meaningful way to engage learners began when Hollywood's primary team attended "The New Elementary School" 1993 conference in Orlando, Florida, where Lilian Katz was the featured speaker. Inspired by her lecture and books, the principal and teachers embraced Katz's philosophy of developmentally appropriate programs, project-based learning, and multiage grouping.

As a principal, I particularly recall Lilian Katz's influence on my own professional development and thinking, especially her insight that when a teacher presents a lesson aimed toward the average student in the class, the instruction is usually too easy for one-third of the students, too hard for another one-third of the class, and thus ineffective for the majority of the students. This realization enabled me to support teachers' innovations that tailored instruction to the unique needs and strengths of individual students. Katz's challenging observations that kindergartners in different regions of the United States were all studying snow in winter and making caterpillars out of egg cartons in the spring rather than being engaged in student activities and products that were directly linked or connected to investigating the real community surrounding their school also had an impact on our thinking and interest in the Project Approach.

Multiage Groupings

Supported by Lilian Katz's research on multiage grouping, Hollywood incorporated the multiage concept into our new building design. The new school consisted of six "houses." Each house included a cluster of three or four self-contained classrooms surrounding a common area. In 1993 when the new building opened, each house consisted of several grade levels (i.e., K to grade 2, or grade 3 to grade 5) to make the house multiage and facilitate students learning from other students. The building was awarded a National School Boards Association Special Award because their jury was "impressed with the overall design which complements multiage grouping, learning, and activity centers, with teaming."

In August 1993 before the building was completely ready for students, a workshop on the Project Approach was conducted by Sylvia Chard for Hollywood's newly formed teaching staff. During that first year, teachers studied project-based learning using Chard's (1992) guide and videos. A group of primary teachers also attended a Staff Development for Educators (SDE) workshop on multiage classrooms. With a growing confidence based on their knowledge of integrated curriculum utilizing project work and multiage strategies, the primary team decided to create multiage primary classes (grades 1/2) in the fall of 1994. Parent information sessions were held to communicate the rationale and advantages of multiage classrooms while also allowing parents a choice to have their child placed in a same-age class if they preferred.

Developmentally appropriate practices recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) were emphasized and consistently used as a reference for both the same-age and multiage programs. Experienced teachers coached beginning teachers, and the teaching teams planned curriculum units and topic and project work together. Spaces within the houses, especially classrooms with moveable walls between them, were assigned to teaching teams who volunteered to work collaboratively. The teachers' response to multiage classrooms was enthusiastic and positive. One classroom teacher with nine years of experience was convinced that she would never want to teach a same-age class of first-graders again because she saw so many benefits for students in multiage settings. She engaged her students in flexible groups with peers of different ages, interests, and abilities, thus maximizing their opportunities to learn from each other and to have their individual learning needs met.

During the past five years, the Hollywood staff have offered a variety of placement options for students including multiage classes (grades K/1, 1/2, 1/2/3, 2/3, 3/4, 3/4/5, 4/5) as well as looping arrangements where teachers continued with the same students for two consecutive years (grades K to 1, 2 to 3, and 4 to 5). Transition of fragile learners between grades and inclusion of special needs students in regular classrooms have been facilitated when a class such as a multiage 1/2 class has partnered with a 3/4 class. These students have especially benefited from working with a team of teachers who know their students (strengths and needs) over an extended period of time. The multiyear experience with the same teacher was also evaluated by parents and teachers, who found the grouping to be particularly beneficial to young learners.

The innovations of multiage classes and project-based learning with a high degree of teacher collaboration created a school climate of support for teacher risk taking and creativity while keeping the focus on each child's success and progress.

Curriculum Connections to Life

Each "house" within our school is named in a different language (e.g., Maison Deux/House Two, Dom Pyacht/House Five) to stimulate student interest in geography, diversity, and world cultures. The combination of the school's new building design and Katz's focus on learner engagement through meaningful exploration of real-world experiences provided the impetus for Hollywood teachers to find curriculum connections to world languages and geography. In December 1993, teachers responded to an invitation from the Moscow Ballet to have Dom Pyacht, our Russian House, students sing and participate in the ballet's performance of "The Nutcracker" in Baltimore. During that performance, 90 Hollywood students participated in the chorus and also experienced firsthand the backstage world of ballet. Students' comments reflected learning connections and possibilities for meaningful project work:

> The dancers were mostly all Russian. It was especially fun to hear them talk to each other in Russian—the words were complicated and neat.
>
> It was great to see the sets change between scenes, you could see people hiding behind other people.
>
> I was very interested in how simply they changed the scenery using a pulley.
>
> The dancers who were women wore toe shoes. The back and middle are like normal ballet slippers but the front inside is wood! That's to help them stand on their toes. When they walked on their toes I thought it was easy until I tried it.

Such unique opportunities for students to explore real-world events became part of the Hollywood experience for teachers and students, as teachers learned to seek out and utilize community resources to inspire learning and student investigations.

In August 1994, the Maryland State Department of Education funded another Project Approach workshop for teachers at Hollywood with a focus on meaningful utilization of the natural outdoor environment as a context for fieldwork and project-based learning. Hollywood's location on the ecologically sensitive southern Maryland peninsula, dotted with creeks and marshes, and surrounded by rivers and the Chesapeake Bay, created incredible opportunities for children and adults to learn from nature. As a new school site where natural habitats had been affected by school construction, Hollywood's environmental team began investigating possible restoration projects with students. These classroom investigations combined with community resources led to site improvements such as planting native wild grasses in the storm water management pond to create a healthy wetlands habitat and converting an unused lawn to a meadow habitat/wildlife study area. A nationwide study of environment-based learning, *Closing the Achievement Gap,* published in 1998 described Hollywood's program results:

> Hollywood students have turned their 72-acre campus into a living lab—blazing a nature trail, creating a butterfly garden, planting a forest habitat for migratory birds, and transforming a drainage pond into a natural wetland. Each project capitalized on the children's innate attraction to the natural world while providing unique opportunities to combine traditional subject areas in a meaningful whole. (Lieberman & Hoody, 1998)

Teaching teams consistently evaluated activities to determine which ones were causing the kind of student engagement that is so essential to learning that lasts.

In the fall of 1998, third-graders went on a field trip to a marsh as part of their study of the Chesapeake Bay. Prior to the trip, students studied maps of the watershed, as well as a map of the peninsula where the marsh is located. At the marsh, the students used dip nets to find out what kinds of organisms live there. They collected small fish, blue crabs, and grass shrimp. While they released most of what they caught, they were so interested in the grass shrimp that they brought some of them back to school to observe under a microscope. Students designed an experiment in a classroom aquarium to test which habitat grass shrimp prefer—marsh grasses or open water. Other students wondered why grass shrimp prefer grassy areas of the marsh. Their research revealed that grasses provide both food and protection. Their experiments and drawings were published in *Dragonfly* magazine (March/April 1999 issue). Later that school year, their teachers participated in a "Bay Grasses in Classes" workshop, a project sponsored by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. In recent years, much of the submerged aquatic vegetation has been lost in the bay and connecting rivers, thereby disturbing the natural ecosystem. Through this project, students learned how to grow bay grasses in the school science lab. They began with seeds, and three months later planted the grasses in a tributary flowing into the Chesapeake Bay. Teacher Julie Tracy (winner of a Presidential Award for Excellence in Teaching Science) emphasizes the importance of students' initiative in project work (Tracy & Glaser, 1999): "If you approach a project saying 'we're going to go out and plant a tree,' then it's the teacher's project. But if the students are engaged in real scientific inquiry, and they're the decision makers directing the project, then it's authentic, and they're engaged in meaningful learning."

Vital Role of the Arts

The Arts have also played a prominent role in Hollywood's evolving story. Again and again, we have found that implementation of project-based learning spawns creative student products. For example, six large tile murals in the school courtyard depict different Chesapeake Bay watershed habitats. To create these murals, six classes each researched a different habitat. Those who had studied marshes in the grass shrimp project made tiles that depicted a salt marsh habitat, while each of the other classes selected a habitat they had been studying. All students researched their chosen habitat and composed a written description that educates others about the plants and animals shown in the mural's scene, as well as the importance of that habitat to the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. The tile murals were made in the art class, where students brainstormed possible designs and then voted on the layout of their habitat scene. Beginning with an actual-size drawing of the entire habitat scene, they made each of the clay tiles to depict a section of the scene.

The results of this mural project as well as numerous other student products have evolved from detailed observational drawings to beautiful watercolors or prints of the plants and animals being studied. Music and drama programs featuring student learning about a topic are another way that student achievements have been shared and celebrated. An active schoolwide arts team regularly seeks funding and staff development opportunities for teachers to incorporate the arts as well as to bring artists, poets, dancers, musicians, and other performing arts resources into the classroom.

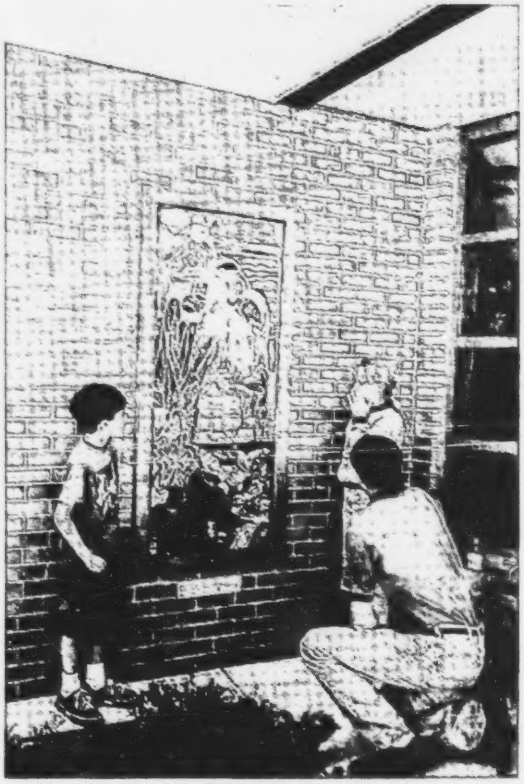

Figure 1. Chesapeake Bay watershed mural, a product of student investigation of the local marsh habitat.

In 1997, a group of Hollywood teachers interested in making geography concepts come alive for students sought administrative support for creating an international fair during which students and teachers could feature the geography, arts, and culture of countries corresponding with the world languages used to name each of the "houses" in the school. Results of this schoolwide exploration and celebration of world cultures were very well received by students and the community. Writers for the student newspaper *The Hollywood Inner Chimes* reported their impressions of the 1999 International Day:

> I thought it was so interesting that the French flag has the same colors as the American flag.
>
> As soon as I walked in the China House, my passport was stamped with a picture of a dragon. Students performed a traditional Chinese bell dance, shaking long sticks with bells. Then everyone got a chance to do Chinese paper cutting.
>
> I learned some Swahili, the language of East Africa. The class talked about the people in East Africa and their way of life…some people live in huts made of grass, twigs, and other sticks. I can see why they would use these materials since they are the natural resources around them.

Because student projects in preparation for International Day experiences have been so successful, this event has become a Hollywood tradition.

Professional Development and Teacher Innovation

Hollywood's success confirms the research of Fallan and Joyce who "found that efforts at innovation must unfold in an environment of support characterized by trust, continuity, shared problem solving, and experimentation" (Maryland Commission on the Early Learning Years, 1992, p. 74). Lieberman and Hoody (1998), describing Hollywood's integrated learning projects, point to the importance of the principal's support and the teamwork among teachers. "In some instances, teachers paired up based on their differing preferences: a nature lover, unfazed by bugs and dirt, and a bookworm, more comfortable juggling papers and pencils." Students see their teachers model lifelong learning. Mary Roderick, an experienced

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fifth-grade teacher, is quoted in this nationwide study report stating: "Because I'm learning too, my attitude is contagious and helpful for my students."

Although it's been quite a challenge to seek and secure funding for teacher workshops, Hollywood has placed a high value on professional growth and adult learning opportunities; teachers have requested and are encouraged to attend a variety of workshops and professional conferences. As well as learning from each other and professional workshops, teachers have also collaborated with community experts—naturalists, legislators, artists, and soil conservationists.

Another project, begun in 1999 and funded by a Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest grant, focused on local history and gathering stories of the past. Teachers and students utilized interviewing skills to learn from older citizens, during a time of transition and rapid growth in St. Mary's County. In this "Sharing our Stories" project, students and teachers concentrated on primary sources to research local history.

As Hollywood has maintained a clear focus on individual student achievement, our evolving mission emphasizes accessing and utilizing a variety of resources, small grants, and volunteers to create an optimal learning environment for every child. Innovation has become a key to success and part of the fabric of Hollywood. Student teachers and new teachers become immersed in instructional implementation that reflects current best practices. Frequent feedback from student teachers and their supervisors indicates their delight to be working in classrooms where they experience firsthand up-to-date educational theory being actualized. Teachers seek job openings at Hollywood to be in a climate of growth. Hollywood's spirit of being a community of learners and leaders inspires and challenges and also attracts new teachers. Different teaching strengths are welcomed, valued, and blended to nurture the variety of student needs and to support a diversity of teaching styles.

Growth and innovation require taking some risks. Hollywood's journey as a professional learning community reflects that willingness to take risks, to learn from mistakes as well as from success, and to utilize reflection and self-renewal as key strategies for professional growth. Teachers are encouraged "to run with their best ideas...[to customize curriculum to students' varying interests and needs]...the combined creativity of Hollywood's talented staff has transformed a little school in rural Maryland into a thriving national model of integrated, environment-based education" (Lieberman & Hoody, 1998).

Results: Tangible and Intangible

The Maryland statewide assessment program measures students' basic skills and their application of those skills in integrated curriculum tasks. Since 1995, Hollywood students have scored significantly higher than state averages in these Maryland assessments as well as in nationally normed achievement tests. Other tangible indicators of success include the number of grants awarded for teacher and student projects, special recognition of school/student achievements, project artifacts created by students, and publications about Hollywood's program such as "Classroom Earth" in the June 1999 issue of *Natural History Magazine*.

Intangible results include both process and product, a spirit of innovation and creativity that fosters adult learning and engaged student learning within a supportive community of learners and leaders. The momentum of the "living curriculum" at Hollywood flows from the willingness and imagination of teachers initiating exciting, authentic projects. In the school lobby and hallways, students' artwork, displays, and murals tell the story of students immersed in projects that are connected to the real world around them. In this "marketplace of learning" atmosphere, visitors frequently comment about the overall school climate as stimulating, purposeful, and creative—a place where diverse strengths, needs, interests, and cultures contribute to the meaningful growth of adults and children.

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Using the Project Approach in Early Childhood Teacher Preparation

Gera Jacobs

Abstract

It is well known that children learn best through hands-on, relevant activities, such as projects. Students preparing for a career in working with young children can also benefit from working on meaningful activities and projects. This paper discusses ways to engage early childhood teacher education students in activities and projects that model the use of these methods in the classroom. It provides an example of a long-term project that took place in an early childhood education course. The project started with students participating in choosing a topic they were interested in researching: all-day compared with half-day or every-other-day kindergarten. Students helped to design survey and interview instruments. They sent surveys to every kindergarten teacher in the state, distributed parent questionnaires, and interviewed children at participating schools. They entered the data into spreadsheets and helped to analyze the results. The project developed over time, culminating in a presentation at the university undergraduate research showcase. Students gained firsthand experience in taking part in a project. They saw the difficulties, challenges, and rewards of using the Project Approach. By using meaningful activities and projects in teacher preparation, students may gain a better understanding of these approaches and may be more likely to use them in their own classrooms.

There are a great many things that new teachers need to learn before stepping into their first teaching positions: learning theories, knowledge of child development, curriculum methods, standards, developmentally appropriate practices (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997), and so much more. There are also many ways that teacher-preparation students can learn the important knowledge and skills they need. They can learn through discussion, lecture, and reading, as well as through hands-on experiences. These experiences can occur in the field through practica, internships, and student teaching. They can also take place in early childhood courses through activities such as project work and learning centers.

Research has shown that children learn best through meaningful activities. It has also shown that children's skills are much more likely to be mastered if they have the opportunity to apply them in meaningful activities (Katz & Chard, 1989). The same may be true of older students who can benefit from being actively engaged in meaningful activities (Jones, 1992; Rogers & Sluss, 1996; Vartuli & Fyfe, 1993). This paper discusses ways of engaging teacher-preparation students in worthwhile projects and activities that will help them gain knowledge, skills, and attitudes they will need to be successful teachers.

Using Learning Centers

Early childhood teacher-preparation classes can begin with lecture, discussion, or small group work. In addition to these activities, students can be given the opportunity to work at learning centers to gain additional information. These learning centers can be set up in a number of ways and on a variety of topics. For example, when students are studying about working with families, centers can be set up to allow students to explore this topic in depth. One center can have a variety of books that deal with working with families or have chapters on the topic. Another center could have articles on working with families, which students could read and critique. At a "computer center" with a computer connected to the Internet, students could explore Web sites that are useful to families, such as Family Village at *http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu*. Students could also watch and take notes on a short video, at a video center set up in the room, concerning parent/professional relationships. Another center could have family calendars that have suggestions each day for activities parents could do with their children. Students could examine the calendars and then be asked to make up their own calendar for a week or month that would encourage parent/child interaction.

Methods courses especially are a natural fit with learning centers. When students are learning about teaching math in developmentally appropriate ways, part of their class time could include working at learning centers that allow them to experience the benefits of hands-on activities and the opportunity to have some choice in which activities to do and how long to spend at each one. Students can visit centers with a variety of math manipulatives, such as unifix cubes, Cuisenaire rods, pattern blocks, etc., so they can see the variety of materials available. They can be asked to try some activities and see which ones they think children would benefit from using. They can design activities that children could do using these materials.

At another center, students could look through books such as *The Creative Curriculum* guides (Dodge & Colker, 1992; Dodge, Jablon, & Bickart, 1994; Dombra, Colker, & Dodge, 1997) or *Explorations with Young Children: A Curriculum Guide from the Bank Street College of Education* (Mitchell & David, 1992) to read from their chapters on how to help children learn math. They can also look through books such as *Story Stretchers* (Raines & Canady, 1991) or *Teaching Young Children Using Themes* (Kostelnik, 1991) to get more ideas on how to incorporate math into units, themes, or projects.

Students can try out highly rated math software programs for children using a computer set up in the classroom. At a library center, students can explore children's books such as *Anno's Counting House* (Anno, 1982), *How Much Is a Million* (Schwartz, 1985), and *1, 2, 3 to the Zoo: A Counting Book* (Carle, 1968). They can also read articles about teaching math from journals such as *Young Children* and *Childhood Education*, or ERIC Digests, and then discuss or write down what they learned through their reading. Having students keep a record of the centers they were involved in, what they did at the center, and what they learned is a helpful way to document their learning. These strategies also provide another model they can follow in their own classrooms by showing them ways children can document their work (Jacobs, 1999).

Using Projects

Projects are another way for students to experience how an inviting, dynamic environment can encourage learning. Projects are defined as "an in-depth study of a topic or theme" (Chard, 1998b, p. 5). According to Katz and Chard (1989), projects can help children meet learning goals in the four major areas of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and feelings. Projects not only help children gain academic skills, social skills, and communication skills, they can help children form good self-concepts about themselves as successful learners. They can also help children gain positive dispositions toward learning. These favorable dispositions toward learning are critical to their future success. Similar dispositions and feelings may be formed by teacher-preparation students who have the opportunity to experience active, engaging work, such as projects and centers in their own coursework. As students are learning about how to use the Project Approach with young children, they can be engaged in their own project, learning and seeing the benefits of using this approach.

One of my goals as an early childhood professor is to help my students understand the Project Approach and have the skills necessary to use it in their future classrooms. I believe it is important for them to appreciate that "young children should have activities that engage their minds fully in the quest for knowledge, understanding, and skill…the Project Approach…provides a context in which all aspects of children's minds can be engaged, challenged, and enriched" (Katz & Chard, 1989, p. xi). I have lectured, shown overheads, had students read about projects, and shared examples of teachers who have successfully done projects. I have told them about the projects in Reggio Emilia (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1994) and shown them videos describing projects that children have done there. At the end of this last semester, though, I felt that my students understood projects much better; they had participated in a project themselves.

Beginning the Project

We did not initially start out to try to do a project. Our purpose was to do some research together as a class. We discussed a number of possible research topics over several days, then decided to investigate the topic of all-day kindergarten. Many of the districts in the state were in the process of trying to decide whether or not to change their format from every-other-day kindergarten or half-day kindergarten to all-day-every-day kindergarten. As a class, we discussed what information we would like to find, how we might investigate this topic, and what sources of information we could use. We decided to ask parents, teachers, and children their opinions about the topic. We filled out the human subject forms and consent forms needed to conduct the surveys and interviews. Without being aware of it, we had just gone through the first phase of project work.

Developing the Project

As we started into the second phase, which involves fieldwork, implementation, and development work (Chard, 1998b), we developed a questionnaire that we sent to every kindergarten teacher in the state. This questionnaire included questions about the teacher's current daily schedule, the type of day each teacher thought would be ideal and why, and a variety of other questions related to kindergarten. We wrote a cover letter and obtained names and addresses from the state department of education. Students who knew kindergarten teachers wrote personal notes on letters to those teachers. Next came the task of putting on mailing labels, stamping return address information on envelopes to enclose, and stuffing the envelopes.

We discussed which districts we would ask to participate in our children's interviews. We chose four districts where we had good contacts, two that already had all-day-every-day kindergarten and two that did not. One of these districts had an every-other-day program, while the other had a half-day program. We developed interview questions for the children to get their views on going full time or part time, as well as questions on other kindergarten topics. We had lengthy discussions on how the kindergarten children might interpret the questions and which terms they might not understand. We discussed how to make things as clear as possible to the students. We also talked about how to make our interviews student friendly, so the children would feel at ease, and yet be systematic in our research to give it validity. Teachers in the schools provided us with times that would be convenient for the interviews. Students then signed up and went to the schools, conducting the interviews with one child at a time. The interviews were a great experience for the students. The interviews allowed them to get into the schools and talk one-on-one with kindergarten children, getting a little insight into their thinking.

We developed a parent questionnaire, which some of the schools gave to their parents. Students also interviewed parents they knew to learn more about the parent perspective.

Concluding the Project

We entered into the final stage of the project once most of the teacher questionnaires were returned and the children's interviews were completed. The students divided into teams to analyze individual questions. They entered the data into spreadsheets we had developed. When all the data had been entered and analyzed, students made charts to show the results. The charts were then used to make a poster display that they presented at the university undergraduate research showcase. This showcase gave students a chance to share what they had learned with the university community as well as visitors to campus. Students took turns during the day-long presentation to answer questions and explain the process to those interested in the work. Students were able to take home a booklet describing all the posters presented and received a certificate for participating. We took digital photos of the students at the showcase, and each student was able to have copies of these. This documentation of their work became part of a portfolio they compiled with the other work they had done throughout the semester.

Toward the end of our work, we realized we had experienced our own project. We had been through all three phases of project work: Beginning the Project, Developing the Project, and Concluding the Project. Within each of these phases, we had included the five structural features of the Project Approach: discussion, fieldwork, representation, investigation, and display (Chard, 1998b). Students were able to gain insight into the thoughts of parents, teachers, and young children. They learned a great deal about how teachers structure their day and the kinds of activities teachers thought were beneficial for their children. The project provided us with opportunities for rich discussions. We had many discussions about the process we were using and what we were learning about our topic. We also discussed the similarities of this project to projects these preservice teachers might do with their own classes in the future and the benefit of participating in projects.

As with many other projects done in programs, this project was only part of our curriculum. We continued learning about new topics in early childhood through a variety of other methods, including discussion, lecture, and centers. We spent varying portions of the class time working on the project. There were days when the project would hardly be mentioned, while a few days were totally consumed with project work.

Conclusion

Students participating in projects and learning centers that are fulfilling and engaging realize for themselves the difference between taking part in meaningful projects and activities and merely sitting quietly through classes listening to a teacher. They experience the benefits of taking part in a project that results in new knowledge, not only for themselves but for sharing with others. Students participating in projects and learning centers in their classrooms often have the possibility of making choices during those activities. According to Chard (1998a), "one of the most powerful motivators for children in the classroom is choice. When children can make a choice from among a range of authentic alternatives and can choose when, for how long, where, and with whom to work, their motivation is likely to be greatly enhanced" (p. 16). The same may be true for older students as well. Students may also gain a deeper appreciation for and understanding of the importance of this type of meaningful learning. They will have experienced firsthand a constructivist approach to learning (Bufkin & Bryde, 1996) where they can take ownership and responsibility in co-constructing their own learning with their peers and instructors. Through these experiences, they will be better equipped to set up an environment that fosters this kind of learning for their own students in the future.

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On Communication and Dissemination

Invisible Mentor: Communication Theory and Lilian Katz

Karen L. Peterson

Abstract

This paper describes the influence of Lilian G. Katz on the dissemination of knowledge in early childhood education. Communication theory, women's learning, and the role of the "invisible mentor" are presented as a model for understanding the impact of her perspectives on the profession. Two major elements are considered in presenting this model: (1) communication, which involves both information distribution and query/examination and requires dissemination; and (2) gender and culture, which influence how communication is "absorbed."

This brief paper proposes the existence of a "new" type of mentor, one who might be labeled "invisible." As a mentor needs a "mentee," the mentee in this model is described as an "absorbent learner." Lastly, it is proposed that the primary connection between individuals takes place through communication. Not only is the process of communication considered essential but, in this case, the content of the communications as well.

The thought processes behind this proposition are built on "things learned" over several years of watching and learning from Lilian G. Katz. The idea of the "invisible mentor" is rooted in the following assumptions: Lilian Katz is unique as a "leader" in early childhood; a majority of the professionals in early childhood are women and as women are strongly influenced by the context in which they learn and grow professionally. Finally, one's understanding and knowing about oneself and young children is individually constructed, subjective, and constantly evolving.

The Leader Role

Without question, Lilian Katz is a leader in the field of early childhood education. Any number of variables (e.g., ability to organize and rally the troops) may define leadership. It is, however, more than a list of qualities and skills. Leadership involves personal performance—having integrity in all things, understanding the servanthood of leadership, and engaging in the practice of equity (DePree, 1992). Leadership is best demonstrated by one who can clearly articulate priorities, establish a tone or "feel" in an organization or profession, and consistently think and communicate at a level just above where the majority of people function.

Given such characteristics and capabilities, there remains a quality (a disposition perhaps) (Katz & Raths, 1985) that is unique in the relationship between Lilian Katz and the early childhood community. Lilian Katz's relationship with the early childhood community is multifaceted. She is a friend, colleague, plenary speaker and "provocateur," author, scholar, and, for thousands, one who is sought after for learning and priority identification. For many, it is her capability to listen and to conduct research, explain and teach, and communicate in a perspective of one in a leadership role that makes her unique. It is her commitment to the "life of the mind" (Katz & Chard, 1989) and profound respect for childhood that draws such admiration and esteem.

The Following

What is "it" that makes for such strong allegiance to the unofficial Lilian Katz professional admiration society? For many of us, membership in the society is seen in our professional behavior (e.g., looking at the National Association for the Education of Young Children annual conferences to see when Lilian is going to speak and setting the evening schedule around the event(s); citing her stories, ideas, and publications when we make presentations to others; elbowing a roommate at a conference when she's been seen getting into the elevator and saying,"*She's* right over there! This is so cool!").

Many of us are members of "the society" because Lilian Katz facilitates our own thinking and, ultimately, our formation of understanding. She demonstrates intellectual inquiry matched with capability that enables her to consistently maintain communication with a broad array of individuals; she is always considerate of the "hidden" intelligence of those in the "audience." In brief, being a "beneficiary" learner of Lilian Katz is a phenomenological experience embedded in the constructivist perspective of one's life history, gender, and professional training. The most significant factor of such learning is to come to understand the impact of communication.

Communication Theory and Knowing

Communication is the essential vehicle through which learning occurs for most of us in professional settings. Communication studies and theory have multiple interpretations from classic to modern, broad to specific. For this paper, we will consider the traditional dissemination perspective on communication.

Traditional communication theory proposes that communication involves the construction of meaning from others through the exchange of symbolic forms/print/writing, rhetoric, nonverbal behavior, and so on. It is absolutely necessary for communications to be extended outward or exchanged (dissemination). Dissemination takes place through communication and involves both information distribution and query/examination.

The dissemination of information can be mediated (others can change, interpret, elect to read, ignore, or critique), and thus this form of communication is considered public because it is generally unidirectional. Interpersonal dissemination is bi- or multidirectional (involving active, "real-time" dialogue, discussion, or allowing for feedback) and is depicted as transactive and dynamic. In both cases, the acquisition of information and subsequent understanding by the "audience" is dependent on multiple factors such as situation; receptivity; and perceived role of communication, gender, age, and familiarity with the subject matter.

Learning through communication takes place when there is engagement with the intended understanding. Following a Vygotsky (1978) tangent, understanding is inherently embedded in culture, and part of one's culture is one's gender. Much of the research over the past 30 years on how learning takes place has focused on issues of gender. Inherent in these perspectives is the supposition that women learn differently from men and that communication is a vital part of women's learning experiences. Communicating information and understanding the position (or role) of the individual being communicated with are the essential elements in determining if an individual "knows." Knowing involves identification of three elements: gender, culture, and the capabilities of the communicator via dissemination.

One of the more familiar models for understanding the triadic interplay among gender, culture, and communication comes from Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986). Belenky et al. propose five types of learning or "knowing." These typologies reflect the processes and procedures women use to come to understand both the concrete and the abstract. Women "come to know" through silence (listening without active interaction), received knowledge (authorities are the "ones" who know), subjective knowledge (understanding comes from highly personal interpretations and value "filters"), procedural knowledge (knowing comes from fitting pieces together in logical and rational ways), and, finally, constructed knowledge (intuitive "hunches" are blended with rational—and complex—thinking) (York, 1995). In each of these typologies, the key is understanding how women "tie together the pieces of communication from the 'outside.'" All of the knowledge "types" advocate for understanding that women's learning is (1) connected to a perceived relationship with other(s); (2) reflective of a multivariable approach to an issue, problem definition, and solution generation; and (3) dependent on learning within a specific context (Tarule, 1988).

One assumption often made by proponents of learning types is that knowledge is acquired when active dialogue takes place between individuals with both similar and slightly varying intellectual perspectives (Vygotsky, 1978). Granted, there is a multitude of research that supports this view, as does the work of Belenky et al. (1986) and Hayes and Flannery (2000). In addition to these more traditional typologies, I propose another "type" of knowledge construction typical among women in the field of early childhood, that of the "absorbent learner."

The Absorbent Learner

An "absorbent learner" is one who holds a strong understanding of the basic tenets of how people (children) grow, change, and are affected by the interactions of others, understand the world, learn, and so forth. The "absorbent learner" listens, discusses, verifies, explains, and uses multiple strategies and styles to come to know but ultimately self-constructs understanding most effectively *with* the assistance of a "mentor."

For the absorbent learner, most of the "pieces" of knowing are present. More often than not, there are billions of pieces (too many vs. not enough), and absorbent knowing requires an external "guide" to help integrate, edit, dispose of, reorganize, and creatively connect the pieces. The person who makes the connections is in an "external role" (i.e., external to the dialogue that takes place between the absorbent learner and the ideas of the "guide"). Such a guide then is often only directly contacted: an invisible mentor. This type of mentor is heard and experienced by an absorbent learner, but only on rare occasions does the "absorbent" directly "dialogue" with the "mentor." The typology of an absorbent learner is one of intellectual activity without direct interaction, conversation, or contact.

What Makes for an Invisible Mentor?

Invisible mentors are not "super-human" persuaders or orators, nor are they icons with intractable wisdom. An invisible mentor has the capacity and capability (albeit a gift) to see just above the "tree top" and the ability and commitment to come "back down" and tell many below what can be seen. In early childhood, an invisible mentor always has more than one "voice" (or perspective). She may talk to professional adults about what children might optimally do, while simultaneously considering the experience from the child's perspective and the experience of those unfamiliar with the professional values of early childhood. Given the significant overabundance of ideas, values, lesson plans, free materials, new curriculum guides, training videos, and other resources that inundate the early childhood professional, the invisible mentor has the instinctive capability to sort out the valuable from the superfluous.

The Gifts

Lilian Katz is the "invisible mentor" for many of us in early childhood, from the classroom assistant teacher to the university professor. Inherent to the concept of the "invisible mentor" are qualities of leadership, exceptional intellect, respect, extraordinary perception, and an affinity for childhood. In considering the impact of Dr. Katz as an invisible mentor, the case might be made for examining every work and every speech to look for the common threads. I propose that there are three overlapping *qualities* found in every act of dissemination and three intersecting *processes* that enable the qualities to "fit together."

In each act of dissemination, I find the *qualities* of *dignity* (i.e., respect for the child, admiration for the work of teaching); *taking the long-term view* (i.e., childhood is about the quality of life *now* and in the future); and *depth of substance* (i.e., children's minds are not for filling with cuteness, trivial fun, and inaccurate information; teaching is not a casual pursuit, and not everyone should teach). These qualities represent the context for each work and idea, and it is what we seek to know from her.

The *processes* (there are three) represent *how* these qualities are joined. The processes by which Katz's invisible mentor functions include *validity* (i.e., what she proposes is real, true, and germane—our sense of what is right is clarified and affirmed); *relevance* (i.e., the best mix of theory, practice, and reflection—our minds are not wasted when we listen); and, finally, *resilience* (i.e., perseverance, intuition, and humor—our minds have new connections that are forever changed). These processes are inner-linked with the qualities and represent the essence of what we gain from this "invisible mentor." The gift has been (and will continue to be) having the opportunity to "absorb" the thinking of Lilian Katz.

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Roundtable IV

Young Children's Initial Exploration of Computers

Mary Jo Graham & Steven R. Banks

Abstract

This study presents the results of a one-year qualitative study. Observational and interview data were collected on 12 preschool children concerning their initial computer use. Children had the choice to use a computer during center time in their preschool. Initial computer use with a mouse was found to occur at approximately 36 months. Some possible gender differences were noted. Girls tended to use the computer as a shared social activity. Boys tended to use the computer more as a solitary game. Children approached the computer in the same way as they approach puzzles and other fine motor activities. Children were drawn away from the computer by open-ended creative activities. The time that children spent on the computer increased with age, but the time periods were not excessive, from 5 to 20 minutes. Children tended to spend longer at the computer in the presence of an adult. They often assumed a slouch typical of college students in a computer lab. Implications of this early computer use are discussed with the recommendation that computer use by preschool children be studied more thoroughly before decisions about early computer use are made.

The introduction of the personal computer into the daily lives of families and into the classrooms of young children presents possibilities and concerns about the benefits of computers for preschool children. In the 1980s, computer use focused on learning computer languages and programming skills. In the 1990s, the growth of "user-friendly" personal computers, along with the growth of the Internet, changed the nature of computer use. Emphasis on computer languages lessened as software programs became self-explanatory. Children and adolescents fearlessly embraced the new possibilities presented by computers. Many elementary and secondary students are now adept at using computers, often more so than their parents and teachers.

As the use of computers at home and in schools grows, younger children are exposed to computers and are naturally curious about computers. Parents frequently tell about the interest that their preschool children have in computers. Endorsed by media, beliefs proliferate among many parents and educators that computers are highly important to the education of young children and their later success (Guernsey, 2000). Children without computers at home and school are often viewed as disadvantaged. Preschools capitalize on this view and advertise the availability of computers to entice parents to enroll children. However, little research has explored the ability of the computer to improve upon current educational methods in the preschool years. In addition, little research has focused on the beginning processes of computer awareness and skill development, and long- and short-term benefits of early use.

On the other hand, some early childhood educators believe that computers are actually pushed into the curriculum by overly zealous educators and demanding parents who are unwisely insisting upon computer skills prior to school entry. As computers have gained access to homes and classrooms, concerns among some early educators have increased. Reports of children spending endless hours on a computer avoiding needed exercise and play abound. Computers have been blamed for homework interference, lack of sleep, and increased obesity. Some early childhood educators are so concerned about computer use that they refuse to integrate computers into their classrooms. One author proposed that computers are inappropriate before the age of 7 (Healy, 1999).

As noted, a paucity of research limits the ability to determine which group of parents and early educators is correct. Some research has indicated that kindergarten children can learn certain basic computer skills (Jones, 1998; Kajs, Alaniz, Willman, & Sifuentes, 1998; Landerholm, 1994). Other research has indicated that, with increased exposure to computers, elementary students show increasingly more positive attitudes toward computers (Miyashita, 1994). Some research has indicated that gender differences remain in attitudes about and use of computers among both primary and secondary students (Bannert & Arbinger, 1996; Kinnear, 1995). However, other research has indicated that gender differences were not apparent in the primary grades (Landerholm, 1994).

One of the few studies on preschool children was completed by Fletcher-Finn and Suddendorf (1997). This study examined the effects of an intervention procedure that involved placing a computer in a home for a period of two and a half months. Pre- and posttests were conducted comparing matched intervention and control groups on certain cognitive measures. While no significant differences were noted on the cognitive outcome measures, there were some interesting ancillary findings. Children spent an average of 1.5 hours per week on the computer. A minimum number of seven to eight computer interactions occurred per week, with an average session lasting about 12 minutes. In a 1996 study, Fletcher-Finn and Suddendorf stated that "computer use in young children appears to accelerate the natural development of representational ability which forms the basis of mature social interaction and the conception of self through time" (p. 110).

This paper examines initial computer use with an attempt to ascertain a typical age norm. We also examine gender differences, attitudes toward computer use, and average use time for individual computer sessions.

Method

Participants

Participants in this study were 12 preschool students, 7 boys and 5 girls. In addition, one of the parents of each child in the study was interviewed. The children's families were economically diverse. At the time the study was initiated, the children's ages ranged from 29 months to 58 months. The mean age of the children was 41 months (3 years and 5 months).

Materials

A guided observation record and a parental interview questionnaire were developed to determine initial computer use among the participants. Both the observational procedure and the parental interview were designed to answer the following research questions:

- At what age can a child appropriately use the mouse to control the computer program?
- Does computer use vary by gender?
- How do preschoolers initially approach the computer?
- How do preschoolers view the computer?
- How long do children use the computer in one single sitting?
- What are the ergonomic aspects of preschoolers' computer use?

Design and Procedure

The design of this study was qualitative, with two components: observations and parental interviews. Observations were completed both through a one-way observation booth and in the classroom at a university laboratory preschool. While the subjects noticed the observers, their presence did not appear to have much effect on the behavior of the subjects. The observers remained passive unless approached by a child when in the classroom. Very little difference in behavior was noted during concealment versus during participant observation. This result may be due to the large numbers of student teachers and parents who come and go in the preschool. In addition to the two authors, two observers were trained to note a series of characteristics that focused on computer usage.

A single computer was placed on the smallest computer table available at one side of the classroom. The table was placed between the dramatic play area and the block area. Two child-sized chairs were placed at the computer table. More chairs were easily available and were moved to the area as needed. The computer was available to children during center time and was turned off when the children engaged in large-group activities. The keyboard was set aside, and only the mouse was made available for the participant's use.

The opportunity to use computers during center time rather than at an assigned time is posited by several authors as best for young children (Haugland, 2000; Hohmann, 1990). This policy was adopted by the preschool for this study. The software selected offered the children a group of pictures from which they could select an activity by clicking on the picture with a mouse. Once the children selected the activity, they used the mouse to participate. A variety of software selections were available on the computer. These included making up songs; playing rhythms by striking percussion instruments; responding to verbal descriptions of characters and selecting the one character that matched the description; and electing designs, colors, and animated effects to create pictures.

Results

The first research question posed by the authors concerns the effective date of initial computer use. As defined by the researchers, this date is when the participants can make the connection between moving the mouse and controlling the cursor. Thus, when the child can successfully move the cursor to a desired position, she can be said to have an effective date for initial computer use. Both the parental survey questionnaire and the classroom observations indicate that the average effective date for initial computer usage is approximately 36 months. Clearly some variation occurs in initial computer use, although no parents reported an initial age more than one or two months before a child's third birthday.

The manner in which children made this connection of mouse and cursor varied as well. Most children began by moving the mouse wildly in circles while watching the screen as if believing that the more energy expended the more likely they were to accomplish the task. However, a teacher would typically put her hand over the child's hand and slow the action down while pointing to the cursor on the screen. With two or three brief sessions of teacher scaffolding and much watching of other children, most children seemed to have the concept of slow deliberate movement of the hand. They would then focus on the cursor specifically rather than the pictures on the screen and worked very deliberately to get the cursor to the desired place. One child put his left hand on the screen and attempted to push the cursor while slowly moving the mouse back and forth.

The second research question asked about the variation in computer use by gender. Neither the survey questionnaire nor the observations indicated any differences in overall computer use by gender. Age, rather than gender, played the major role in determining the extent of computer use. Observations indicated that girls appeared more likely to socialize with other children while using the computer. In effect, they more often worked with another child and were more likely to engage in cooperative play with other children at the computer. Boys appeared slightly more likely to engage in solitary play with the computer.

The third question asked how the children approached the computer initially. In many respects, the children approached the computer in the same way that they approached other learning centers at the preschool. They were neither overly excited by the computer, nor did they ignore it. Children seemed to respond to the computer as they did to puzzles in the fine motor center. The children's times were short, most often 5 to 10 minutes at the computer. These times were similar to the times children spent at the fine motor table. If a teacher actively interacted with the children at the computer or the fine motor table, the children tended to stay at these centers longer. In fact, if a teacher were present, lines of children waiting to play the computer would sometimes form.

The fourth question addressed how preschoolers viewed or defined the computer. One of the participants initially stated that a "computer was what Daddy worked on." Another child indicated a similar attitude. However, in general, the children viewed the computer as a toy or a game; they saw it as similar to a Nintendo game. One of the children started to act out typing on the keyboard. Another child made the connection between the computer CD and CDs in the store. According to the parent interview, this child now wants to buy every CD that he sees.

The fifth question addressed the issue of how long children used the computer in one single sitting. In general, they used it for a relatively short time, with this factor apparently age dependent. Use time varied between 5 and 10 minutes. With several of the older children, individual computer time reached 15 to 20 minutes. Again, age was the prime predictor of length of use. During heavy use periods when lines of children were waiting to use the computer, the teachers would use a timer, set at 5 to 7 minutes. None of the participants seemed particularly "addicted" to the computer. In nearly every case, the participants treated the computer like any other learning center.

The sixth question addressed the ergonomic aspects of computer use. Slouching and poor posture were noted during computer use. One observer noted that two of the children virtually had their noses touching the screen. Observers' reports indicated a lot of fingers touching the screen. Because of the nature of the computer station, nearly all the children had to look up to the screen. This position did result in hyperextension of the neck. Most of the children also had to raise their arms to deploy the mouse.

Discussion

Rogoff (1990) describes the engagement of children and caregivers in the process of guided participation as they develop the skills and understandings necessary for participation in their social world. Today's teachers and parents have learned about computers as adults and did not experience guided participation as children. With this insufficient history to guide caregivers in developing mutual understandings with children about computers, it is understandable that discomfort and controversy surround the use of computers with young children.

Computers are a new tool of our social world. Just as the invention of refrigeration and the range changed the way we cook and the automobile changed the organization of our urban areas, the computer has the ability to change the way we organize and access information, communicate, conduct business, maintain records, and entertain ourselves. The introduction of a new tool creates a period of uncertainty as we learn to make that tool a part of our daily lives. It is perhaps that period of uncertainty that we are now experiencing. Some fear the new tool, particularly in the hands of young children; others wholeheartedly embrace the tool. However, if the computer is ever to be understood for its potential benefits and evils, rational and systematic exploration of the impact of the computer on young children's experiences both for the short and long term is required. Research must identify the consequences of computers in the early years so that judicious constructive utilization can be made of this new tool.

In making the decision to include computers in a laboratory preschool, research literature was scrutinized to help make a determination of the potential long- and short-term benefits for young children. In addition, information was sought about the age at which children demonstrated sufficient fine motor, perceptual, and cognitive competency to use a computer. The needed information was simply unavailable. It is important to know if developmental patterns are altered for young children and how these alterations may affect the quality of life as children mature. A broader base of knowledge was needed by the preschool to make truly wise choices about the use of computers in the classroom.

What does exist in the research literature is a collection of articles about the developmental appropriateness of particular software and ways of including computers in the classroom (Haugland, 2000; Hohmann, 1990). The literature suggests a wholehearted acceptance of computer use, but is this acceptance justified? Little documentation about when and how children can typically use computers with competence is available. The impact of computer use in the preschool years is not measured. It would seem logical that learning to use a mouse would have some impact on fine motor and perceptual development patterns and that the use of this new medium could have an impact on cognitive development. With few exceptions, research focused on preschool children has not explored these areas to any great extent. Extensive research to inform parents and early childhood educators about the impact and outcomes of early computer use is needed.

Because of the lack of information, the laboratory school personnel made the decision to introduce the computer to the classroom and systematically document children's use. Once the necessary hardware was obtained, the greatest challenge was software selection, particularly avoiding software that introduced letters and numbers. The school personnel regard introduction of letters to be premature and first introduce written language as a whole. In addition, the preschool teachers wanted software that allowed children to have many creative choices. Very few software programs met these requirements.

The first question posed by the authors concerned the effective date of initial computer use. While 36 months was the average, the small sample size of 12 children certainly limits the ability to generalize. Whether age of accomplishment is linked to social and environmental factors, cognitive development, or motor and perceptual development is still to be determined. Designating the age of 3 as the age of initial computer competence is subject to the same criticism that all norms and milestones encounter.

The manner in which children made the connection of mouse and cursor and learned to control the cursor through the mouse varied as well. Scaffolding by the teachers clearly played a role in the development of the ability to use the mouse. Teachers assisted the children by developing the feel for mouse movement with hand-over-hand movement and drew their attention to the tiny cursor on the screen. Children may be able to accomplish this skill on their own at a later age, but the scaffolding allowed the children to learn the skill earlier.

It appears possible to teach children to use a computer at an early age. However, this ability does not answer the question of the appropriateness of learning to use a mouse at 3 rather than waiting until children have taught themselves a few years later. Because a child can learn something at a particular age does not necessarily mean that it is appropriate for a child to do so. The process of figuring out how to use the mouse is essentially different from instructing a child to use a mouse. Does a child gain certain benefits from solving problems on her own that are lost by instructing the child? Further study comparing both short- and long-term outcomes of the self-taught child with the instructed child could help clarify this issue and provide guidance to the early educator.

The preschool did not place the keyboard within easy reach of the children. Only the mouse was readily available. The children did not express interest in letters, and therefore the keyboard seemed to be irrelevant. However, as the school year progressed, several of the children were attempting to write their names. Therefore, the keyboard was placed so as to encourage use. The children continued to use the mouse. Because one child in the room was blind, large printed uppercase letters with raised Braille letters were put on each key. However, this labeling did not create any additional interest. The lack of interest in letters seemed appropriate for the age of the children. Much of the software advertised for preschool use focuses on learning letters. These software packages seem mislabeled.

The second question explored differences among children by gender and age. Slight gender differences were observed, but these differences may have more to do with a child's general temperament or dispositions than with gender. Again, the small sample prevents generalization. The girls who were more social in their use of computers may well be more socially disposed. Age, social development, and temperament type would need to be controlled in an investigation of gender differences in the early years. It would also be helpful to look at who uses the computer and what they do with the computer in the child's world outside school. If the child is accustomed to seeing a male or female person using a computer in a particular way, the child may well develop beliefs about the way that a computer should be used by a particular gender.

The third question focused on the way that children initially approached the computer. The children tended to approach the computer as they would the puzzle and fine motor center. If a teacher was present, lines of children wanting computer time tended to form. If an observer who appeared disinterested in the computer was nearby or if no adult was nearby, the children's interest was not as great.

This behavior is similar to how the children approached the fine motor center, suggesting that the computer is a place where children seek to connect with adults. This observation raises the question about children's real interest. Are children interested in computers because adults express a fascination with them and children want to connect with adults?

During the semester, the computer was moved from the wall between centers into the housekeeping center. The majority of the parents indicated that the children had seen a computer in the household. School personnel surmised that because the computer is a tool in the home similar to the telephone, refrigerator, and microwave, that children may include the computer in their imaginative play. However, the computer simply got in the way of imaginative play. The children continued to use the computer as a fine motor activity and did not incorporate the computer into dramatic play. It was noted that in the children's homes, computers are not located in the active part of the home but rather are tucked away in a study or corner of a room. Children do not see them as a central part of family activity; family members may be more likely to retreat to use computers.

On one occasion, the children organized the chairs and steering wheels of the entire classroom into a giant vehicle to go to the beach. (Most children in the school spend a week of vacation in their family vans traveling to the beach.) Therefore, this activity was exciting to a majority of the group. The children gathered almost all of the materials in the block, fine motor, and dramatic house play areas into their vehicle. They ignored the computer. The only use the computer had that day was from the few children who did not join the trip to the beach.

Perhaps the most interesting incident involving the computer was the day that a bag of pea gravel was dumped on the floor in the area next to the blocks and vehicles. For six mornings of school, not one child used the computer. In fact, all of the children played with the pea gravel. At first, the pea gravel was used entirely with the trucks, but by the third morning, children were incorporating pea gravel into their household play and fine motor play. With such an engaging new open-ended material, children were not at all interested in the computer. This behavior further supports the possibility that children's primary interest in the computer is to understand adults' fascination with the tool and perhaps to learn to control the pictures in a way that television cannot be controlled. After all, a developmental goal of young children is to understand and control their environment. Considering the reaction of the children, computers do not seem to be a high priority of the children, particularly when more creative open-ended materials are available.

The fourth question asking how children viewed the computer indicated that their previous experiences play a role. In addition to being used as a fine motor activity similar to a puzzle, several other uses by individual children were noted. One child used the computer to separate from his mother in the morning. The child and the mother sat at the computer for about 5 minutes doing one of the activities before the child was willing to bid his mother farewell. The few children who at cleanup time would busy themselves at the computer while the others cleaned up demonstrated another use. Once the tactic was pointed out to student teachers, the computer was turned off at the beginning of cleanup, and the escaping children were engaged in the cleanup process.

The fifth question addressed the issue of how long children used the computer in one single sitting. Generally, activities that required the child to create or choose were most popular, and children spent longer with these activities than with the activities requiring children to match requests of the computer. Children who were older used the computer for longer periods of time.

Excessive time at the computer was not observed. When the children had the choice of a wide variety of classroom activities, particularly open-ended creative activities, children were brief in their computer use. Reports of children using computers for extended periods raise questions about the choices available to children during these extended periods of use. Environments with uninteresting or limited choices may be fostering the misuse of computers by children, and this possibility is worth further study.

The sixth question explored the ergonomic aspects of computer use. The positioning of children at the computer raised some concern. Although the smallest computer table available through catalogs was selected, all but the tallest children looked up to the screen. This position hyperextends the neck. Children should be positioned so that they look straight at the computer or with their head turned down slightly. In addition, arms should fall relaxed from the shoulder with a 90-degree bend at the elbow (K. Kittusamy, personal communication, 2000). Most of the children had to raise their arm to reach the mouse. If children were placed on a higher chair to accommodate the proper positioning, their feet could not touch the floor.

Ergonomic factors may present one of the more troubling aspects of initial computer use. While children are not spending time in these positions to the extent that damage would occur, it is allowing children to grow accustomed to habits that are not healthy in the long term. Further work needs to be done in designing furniture if children are going to use computers. It would be wise to have tables that can be raised and lowered easily to adapt to the varying heights of children. Also a concern was children who moved their noses close to the screen. This position raises concern about potential visual problems that may need to be studied more closely.

Conclusions

Information is very limited on the impact of computers in the lives of young children. Not only is more information needed to assess the worth of computers in the early childhood setting, but if computers are deemed worthy for young children, more information is needed on how best to introduce computers to young children and how best to utilize computers at home and in the classroom. More research must be conducted to inform early childhood educators.

This study with a small group of preschool children found that children successfully learn to manipulate the cursor with the mouse at 3 years of age. Teachers were able to assist the children in gaining expertise with hand-over-hand scaffolding. Children in this group were quite neutral to computers, using them briefly much the same way they use puzzles. Children preferred more open-ended activities that required their input both in the classroom and on the computer. Children also used computers to make transitions and to connect with adults. The children did not include the computer in their imaginative play. Children were disinterested in the keyboard except to imitate a typing behavior. Gender differences were noted but were difficult to interpret.

The time that children spent with the computer was related to age. The youngest children often spent less than 5 minutes at the computer, while the older children would sometimes sit at the computer for 20 minutes. This length of time did not seem to limit the children's experiences with other materials and activities in the classroom. The greatest concern focused on the poor posture that children maintained. The furniture limited the ergonomically sound placement of children at the computer. The potential for development of poor habits in the long term must be considered. Another concern was noted in the selection of software. Much of the software labeled for preschool use seemed inappropriate.

Certainly, much needs to be learned before it is possible to wholeheartedly endorse or limit computer use in the early years. Because computers are increasingly available to children at home and at school and they are becoming much easier to use, it is wise to thoroughly research computer use beginning in the early years.

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Child Maltreatment:
Effects on Development and Learning

Barbara Lowenthal

Abstract

The number of young children who have suffered from maltreatment has risen in recent years. This paper describes the negative neurological, psychological, and cognitive effects from this maltreatment. Interventions that can prevent abuse and neglect and promote resilience in the child victims are examined and discussed. The paper concludes that concerned citizens need to advocate for preventive efforts that promote resilience in the child victims.

The number of American children each year exposed to traumatic events is estimated as four million (Schwartz & Perry, 1994). Traumatic events include physical, sexual, and emotional abuse; neglect; accidents; severe injuries; and natural disasters such as floods and tornadoes. Post-traumatic stress disorders can develop in youngsters from these experiences and may cause a range of neuropsychiatric disorders such as phobias, conduct and behavioral difficulties, depressions, and anxieties. This paper focuses on the detrimental effects of maltreatment, including abuse and neglect, on young children. The possible neurological, psychological, and cognitive sequelae are discussed. Interventions that can promote resilience in the child victims are then described. As concerned professionals, families, and citizens, we need to advocate both for methods of prevention of child maltreatment and for interventions that will assist maltreated youngsters.

Neurological Effects of Abuse and Neglect

Recent research has provided more information about the neurology and development of the brain during the first years of life. At birth, the brain is the most immature organ in the human body and will continue to develop as a result of nature or genetics and through environmental experiences. These events can have positive or negative consequences for healthy development (Terr, 1991). Different areas of the brain are responsible for specific functions (Terr, 1991). Systems in the frontal content are responsible for abstract thought. Systems in the limbic area regulate emotion and the attachment process. Other systems in the brain stem regulate the heart rate, blood pressure, and states of arousal (Tauwer, 1989).

In these diverse areas, millions of nerve cells or neurons are connected to each other by synapses. The synapses are pathways that make up the wiring of the brain (Newberger, 1997). The wiring allows the various regions of the brain to communicate with each other. Brain development after birth consists of a continuous process of wiring the connections between neurons. New synapses form, and others not used are pruned or broken away. During the first year of life, a baby can have an amazing array of 1,000 trillion synapses in her brain. However, by the age of

10 years, the pruning or weeding process occurs more frequently than the formation of synapses (Nash, 1997). The child then has about 500 trillion synapses, approximately the same as an adult.

Neurodevelopment can be disrupted in the young child in two ways: the first is by a lack of sensory experiences during the critical process of brain development. Sensory experiences are necessary for the optimal organization of the brain (Stermer, 1997). The other way is through an abnormal activation of neuron patterns caused by extremely difficult experiences such as maltreatment and neglect (Perry, 1993). These atypical environmental events can result in the malfunctioning of the regions of the brain responsible for the regulation of affect, empathy, and emotions. Continual abuse and neglect also can cause a disruption in the attachment process of the infants with their caregivers and a lack of trust in their environments (Nash, 1997).

The neurological reasons for the malfunctioning of the brain can be traced to the initial responses to threat that human beings exhibit. This reaction is often called the fight or flight response, which prepares individuals to defend themselves against perceived threats. Under the stress of the fight or flight response, the individual exhibits increases in the heart rate and in the production of a steroid hormone called cortisol. High levels of cortisol cause the death of brain cells and a reduction in the number of synapses. Studies of adults who have experienced continuous abuse as children indicate that the prolonged stress of maltreatment results in a shrinkage of the regions of the brain that are responsible for memory, learning, and the regulations of affect and emotional expression (Newberger, 1997). Other investigations have shown that the brains of maltreated children can be 20% to 30% smaller when compared with their nonmaltreated peers (Perry, 1993).

Maltreated youngsters tend to develop brains that are attuned to dangers. At the slightest threat, the children will anxiously look for any signals that indicate further abusive attacks. These early experiences of stress form templates in the brains in which the fear responses become fixed. The brain becomes organized just for the purpose of survival. The results are that the child victims are constantly in states of high alert that could assist them to avoid further maltreatment but are costly to their optimal development. The youngsters are at great risk for emotional, behavioral, learning, and physical difficulties (Herman, 1992; Terr, 1990). Other long-term effects could be the reduction in the opportunities to experience comfort, support, and nurturance, which are necessary for secure relationships.

Other ways of coping with fears of maltreatment are freezing and disassociative responses, behaviors that may be demonstrated by infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Physical flight often is not possible for very young children. The freezing or lack of movement response occurs when the youngsters perceive they have no control over threatening events. The freezing response allows time to process the stress-producing experience. However, abusive caretakers often interpret this reaction as noncompliance and then further mistreat the children. If the maltreatment is of sufficient duration, the organization of the brain is again altered. The template of fear becomes fixed in the brain, and the youngsters consistently feel anxious and insecure even when experiences are nonthreatening. Behaviors that can result from these feelings are hypervigilance, hyperactivity, aggression, tantrums, irritability, and regression in development (James, 1994).

Disassociation is another response to maltreatment. It is a response in which individuals separate their painful experience from conscious awareness. The use of dislocation protects the children against overwhelming emotions and thoughts about the maltreatment. However, when carried to an extreme, this response can result in dysfunctions in memory, amnesia, and hallucinations (Terr, 1991; Herman, 1992). The youngsters may also exhibit disorders in self-identity.

Psychological Effects of Abuse and Neglect

Psychological effects of abuse and neglect include the deregulation of affect, the avoidance of intimate relationships, provocative behaviors, and disturbances in the attachment process.

Disregulation of Affect

Maltreated children often display problems in their regulation of affect and emotions. They frequently have intrusive and upsetting emotional memories of their maltreatment, which they attempt to control by generating and avoiding displays of their feelings (James, 1994). Sometimes, the only way they can identify their emotions is through physiological responses such as increased heart rates and perspiration. The children appear to be able to describe other people's feelings but cannot describe their own feelings.

Avoidance of Intimacy

Child survivors of abuse and neglect tend to avoid intimacy in their relationships because the feeling of closeness increases their feelings of vulnerability and lack of control (James, 1994). Intimacy is not desired because it represents a threat rather than nurturance and love. To avoid intimacy, children may exhibit withdrawal, lack of eye contact, hyperactivity, aggression, and other inappropriate behaviors.

Provocative Behaviors

If maltreated children are unable to experience relief through numbing, they may exhibit more provocative behaviors in order to initiate the numbing process that can quiet their fears of more maltreatment. Some of the provocative behaviors include aggression and inflicting harm to others, inflicting harm to themselves such as mutilation and suicide, and behaving in antisocial ways that result in harsh punishments. The underlying purpose behind these provocative and emotional acts is to produce the numbing responses that can lessen their extreme fears.

Disturbances in the Attachment Process

Attachment is viewed by Hanson and Lynch (1995) as the bonds that young children form with their primary caregivers, usually their parents. Theories of the attachment process provide information about the role of early relationships in shaping the development of the child's personality and social-emotional adjustment (Thurman & Widerstrom, 1990). The attachment process is significant because it affects the child's ability to cope with stress, regulate emotions, benefit from social supports, and form nurturing relationships. All of these abilities become questionable for maltreated youngsters because their attachment processes are disrupted (Barnett, 1997). Under typical circumstances, the caregiver and the young children form close emotional bonds and secure relationships. Attachments can be observed by the following behaviors of babies and their parents: (1) the youngsters demonstrate strong preferences for their primary caregivers and derive enjoyment and comfort from that closeness with them; (2) the parents demonstrate their attachments in their desire to comfort, protect, love, and enjoy their babies while demonstrating uneasiness and sadness when separated. Because the attachment process promotes feelings of security, trust, and self-esteem, it also fosters the infants' desire to explore and learn from their environments. Secure attachments help children in all areas of development but are essential in establishing their feelings of self-esteem and worth (Moroz, 1996).

The experiences of abuse and neglect can impede the attachment process and decrease the youngsters' feelings of security and trust in their caregivers. Because of the maltreatment, children feel unworthy, unloved, and view the world as a dangerous, unhappy place. When their caregivers are neglectful, uncaring, and abusive, the children become more vulnerable to the stressors of life and will have difficulties in forming close and positive relationships with others. The unmet needs of the child victims may result in anger and resentment of their caregivers, and these responses may then transfer to other relationships in their lives (Zeanah, 1993).

Effects on Cognition and Learning

Cognitive implications of child abuse include difficulties in learning and in school performance. Many studies have consistently stressed that abused, maltreated, or neglected children on the average score lower on cognitive measures and demonstrate lower school achievement when compared with their nonabused peers of similar socioeconomic backgrounds (Vondra, Barnett, & Cicchetti, 1990; Barnett, 1997).

Recent theories on child-caregiver attachment have suggested that negative interactions between the youngster and the caregiver may account for some of this poor school achievement (Vondra, Barnett, & Cicchetti, 1990; Barnett, Vondra, & Shonk, 1996). Youngsters with caring parents or caregivers learn to view themselves as worthy, lovable, and successful in school-related and cognitive tasks. However, children of uncaring caregivers may see themselves as unworthy of love or caring and incompetent in school performance. The detrimental characteristics of abusive or neglectful parenting often lead to loss of self-esteem and a lack of motivation to succeed at school. At a very early age, maltreated children exhibit difficulties in self-esteem, behavior, and adaptation to their environments. Abused toddlers respond more negatively, in contrast with nonabused peers, to their mirror images and make fewer positive statements about themselves (Barnett, 1997).

It appears that by preschool age, there are specific behaviors associated with the different types of maltreatment. In a study by Erickson, Stroufe, and Pianta (1989), physically abused preschoolers demonstrated more angry and noncompliant behavior compared with their nonabused classmates of similar socioeconomic backgrounds. The maltreated children also were more impulsive, disorganized, and distractible, and they were less successful on preacademic tasks. They lacked the prerequisite social and work skills for age-appropriate adjustment in their preschool and kindergarten classes. Almost half of the physically abused youngsters were referred for special education or retention by the end of kindergarten. Similarly, psychologically abused young children displayed more disruptive, noncompliant behavior and a lack of persistence in their schoolwork compared with their nonabused classmates. Patterns of behavior that were characteristic of the sexually abused children in this study included extreme anxiety, inattentiveness, and problems in following directions. Their social behaviors ranged from withdrawal to extreme aggression with the consequence of rejection by their peers. Common characteristics of these children were their dependency on adults and strong need for the approval of their teachers. Their dependent behaviors seemed to reflect their roles as victims in their homes.

The neglected group of children appeared to display the most severe problems in a number of studies (Eckenrode, Laird, & Doris, 1993; Mash & Wolfe, 1991). They were the least successful on cognitive tasks in kindergarten compared with the other types of maltreated children. They also were more fearful, inattentive, and apathetic, and they had difficulty in concentrating on cognitive tasks. Socially, they demonstrated inappropriate behaviors and were not accepted by their classmates. These youngsters rarely demonstrated positive affect, humor, or enjoyment. A majority of these neglected children were retained or referred for special education (learning disabilities, social-emotional, behavioral difficulties) at the end of kindergarten. A major reason for their poor performance could have been the lack of stimulation that the children received in their homes due to poor quality and erratic living conditions. The effects of their environments became more obvious at school because the children lacked opportunities to learn the necessary social and cognitive skills for school success.

At later school age, a number of studies demonstrated that all types of maltreated children demonstrated more cognitive difficulties and were considered more at risk for school failure and dropping out than their nonmaltreated classmates (Kurtz, Gaudin, Wodarski, & Howing, 1993; Reyome, 1993). The abused youngsters were rated by their teachers as more overactive, inattentive, impulsive, and disorganized than their nonabused classmates. They appeared less motivated to achieve at school and had difficulty learning. This common pattern of behavior for different types of child abuse may indicate that often the forms of abuse overlap. Children may suffer from more than one type of abuse such as a combination of emotional, sexual, and physical maltreatment, and neglect.

Two studies compared the characteristics of the physically abused, sexually abused, and neglected school-age children (Kurtz, Gaudin, Wodarski, & Howing, 1993; Eckenrode, Laird, & Doris, 1993). The physically abused pupils displayed significant school problems. Their performance was poor in all academic subjects but especially in mathematics and language. They appeared to be underachievers and were more likely to be retained than their nonmaltreated peers. In adolescence, they were at risk for dropping out of school. Both teachers and caretakers reported their children as having significantly more behavioral problems than their comparison nonabused classmates.

Neglect was associated with the poorest academic performance among the groups of maltreated students. Teachers reported that these pupils were performing below grade level and that their rate of school absenteeism was nearly five times that of the comparison nonneglected students. Neglect appears to have a greater long-term impact on academic achievement than other forms of maltreatment. However, the adaptive functioning of the neglected group was within normal limits. Perhaps these children learned the necessary survival skills out of necessity because of the lack of care in their homes. Sexually abused children, on the other hand, were similar to nonabused youngsters in academic performance. Although sexual abuse has negative social-emotional consequences, its effect on academic achievement was not evident in these studies. However, for all types of abuse and neglect, there is a compelling need for intervention by school personnel to try to prevent further maltreatment and to assist the child victims with their learning difficulties.

Interventions to Prevent Maltreatment and Promote Resilience

As can be seen from the above description, maltreated children are at high risk for psychological, neurological, and cognitive impairments. By the time the child victims are identified as maltreated, they may have already developed problems. Teachers need to pay greater attention to methods of prevention that promote resilience such as the availability of alternate caregivers, social support systems, interventions, and home visiting.

Availability of Appropriate Caregivers

When maltreatment by the primary caregivers occurs, it is essential for the children to have access to alternate caregivers who will love, nurture, and protect them. Those alternate caregivers may be grandparents, extended family members, foster and adoptive parents, teachers, and other interested community members. Alternate caregivers can provide children who have been traumatized by maltreatment the safety and nurturance they need to recover from their traumas.

Therapeutic caregiving does not allow the response patterns of fight or flight and dissociation to become permanently fixed in the children's brains. Thus the youngsters can acquire a sense of trust and be open to positive emotional experiences and new learning. Therapeutic caregiving requires better-than-average caretaking skills. Some necessary attributes include the ability to empathize with the child's pain, the ability to recognize that some antisocial behaviors are reflections of hurtful past experiences, an understanding of the child's need to process these experiences, a desire to be a part of a treatment team, and a strong belief by the caregivers that their actions will eventually assist the youngster even if at present the benefits are not visible. The caregivers must support the needs of these child victims to help them develop positive self-images as worthwhile and loveable human beings (Moroz, 1993).

In order to promote their resilience, the children need warmth, love, empathy, security, and a sense of belonging. Nurturance is providing attentive, loving care. Empathy is the feeling that the caregivers understand and try to alleviate painful memories. Security is having the stability of predictable routines, and a sense of belonging are feelings of belonging and attachment (Moroz, 1996). All these qualities are necessary for alternate caregivers to foster children recovering from maltreatment and to promote their emotional healing.

Social Support Interventions

Social support is defined by Dunst, Trivette, and Deal (1988) as including "the emotional, physical, informational, instrumental, and material aid provided by others to maintain health and well-being, promote adoptions of life events, and foster development in an adaptive manner" (p. 28). Informal support includes family members, extended family, friends, neighbors, and social groups such as clubs, religious organizations, and peer support groups. Formal support consists of professionals, home-visiting programs, parenting classes, vocational assistance, and mental health services. Formal support systems are organized by professionals who provide help to clients in need of their services.

Informal Support Systems

Some parents and caregivers who abuse their children may have themselves suffered from maltreatment as children and may have been affected by spousal abuse, substance abuse, violence, poverty, and unemployment. Informal supports such as appropriate child care, respite care, employment opportunities, transportation, and financial aid provided by their families, friends, and community members are of great help. The use of informal sources of support often enables dysfunctional families to stop the cycle of child abuse and increase appropriate family functioning (Barnett, 1997).

Formal Support Systems

Successful formal support programs that reduce child maltreatment have been identified in the literature (Daro, 1993; Barnett, Manley, & Cicchetti, 1993). These programs offered dysfunctional families a combination of comprehensive community services, which improved their functioning and stopped child maltreatment. The services included providing for survival needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. The programs that taught basic parenting skills such as changing diapers or feeding babies also were effective with neglectful families. Providing family therapy was helpful because it offered these families opportunities to model and practice appropriate caretaking skills. The programs demonstrated improvements in other areas such as reductions in family stress and dysfunctioning (Barnett, Manley, & Cicchetti, 1993).

Intervention Programs for Child Victims

Intervention services for maltreated children have been increasing. Model programs have included high-quality child care and preschools that specialize in the treatment of neglected and abused young children. However, these programs have encountered many challenges in their efforts to help children who may have a combination of language, cognitive, and social-emotional delays because of their maltreatment (Barnett, 1997). The National Clinical Evaluation study examined the outcomes of 19 separate projects (Daro, 1993). The projects were especially designed for maltreated young children and employed teachers who were trained in therapeutic techniques. About 70% of the abused children, ages 18 months to 8 years, demonstrated improvements in their adaptive cognitive and social-emotional skills. Other therapeutic activities were described by Culp, Little, Letts, and Lawrence (1991). The programs provided services such as play therapy, speech and language therapy, occupational and physical therapies, and home visits. The curriculum was designed to foster positive relationships of the children with adults and peers to increase their abilities to regulate emotions and to improve the children's self-esteem. Court-mandated services for the maltreating parents consisted of comprehensive group and individual therapies and home visits by professionals. Positive outcomes were observed for both the maltreated children and their parents (Barnett, 1997). The results of studies of these projects indicated that maltreated youngsters and their caretakers require individualized treatments for special problems. The timing of the treatment also had an effect on the outcomes. Maltreating parents in therapy for 18 months made more improvements in their interactions with the children compared with parents who were in treatment for shorter periods of time (Culp, Little, Letts, & Lawrence, 1991). Home visits appeared effective because they helped the parents to manage their stressors before their maltreatment of the youngster became fixed behaviors. Other preventive measures consisted of mental health services that enabled some parents to relieve emotional problems that interfered with their parenting skills.

Conclusion

This paper has concentrated on the negative effects of maltreatment on young children. The possible neurological, psychological, and cognitive difficulties from the maltreatment were described. More research and knowledge of additional preventive methods and interventions that assist the child victims are needed and should be advocated by concerned professionals, families, and community members.

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Early Head Start: Services for Children with Special Needs and Staff Training Needs

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Abstract

The Great Lakes Quality Improvement Center for Disabilities (GLQIC-D) provides training and technical assistance regarding disabilities to Head Start and Early Head Start (EHS). This paper presents the findings of a GLQIC-D survey of Early Head Start programs in the Department of Health and Human Services Region V, including Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The survey probed the following areas: (1) preferred types of training and technical assistance for EHS staff, (2) issues/concerns and challenges EHS staff are facing, (3) types of disabilities served in EHS, and (4) the adaptations needed to provide services to children with disabilities. In addition to demographic data and census information on the programs and children with disabilities, major findings include the following: (1) the highest concern for programs was teenage parenting; (2) programs preferred varying types of training and assistance depending on their needs; and (3) the top three diagnosed disabilities were speech and language delay, asthma, and communication disorder. Most Early Head Start staff either did not interpret the children's disabilities as severe or very few children with more severe disabilities were enrolled.

Head Start (HS) has been a promising program for young children from low-income families for over three decades, providing comprehensive services such as education, disability services, health and nutrition, mental health, and parent education for the poorest of the nation. Early Head Start (EHS), a new initiative for low-income pregnant women and children from birth through 3, which began in 1995, offers comprehensive services to pregnant mothers and young children. Increasing numbers of pregnant women (teenage or low-income or both) have become a priority in the United States with the changes in legislation in welfare reform and family development (Children's Defense Fund, 1999; Lally & Keith, 1997). Because of the Personal Responsibility Reconciliation Act of 1996, also called welfare reform, a shortage of affordable child care for low-income families has emerged as an urgent problem for the population most affected by welfare reform. Strong partnerships between HS and community child care are essential. Head Start and Early Head Start programs are developing contractual agreements with community child care to create an optimal environment for children.

Few studies of EHS are available regarding the effectiveness of services for children with disabilities as well as other staff needs and challenges. There is a great need to study EHS, particularly regarding models for serving children with disabilities. HS, including EHS, is mandated within the scope of their federal regulations (Head Start Bureau, 1996) to keep at least 10% of enrollment opportunities open for children with disabilities. Utilizing HS and EHS as inclusive settings for children with disabilities remains a challenge at this time. The purpose of this study was to answer two questions: (1) how are children with disabilities served in EHS programs? and (2) what do EHS teachers report they need to know in order to carry out their work successfully?

In order to investigate what types of training and technical assistance EHS staff need, the Great Lakes Quality Improvement Center for Disabilities (GLQIC-D) conducted a joint needs assessment of the EHS programs (EHS Waves I and II—the EHS programs funded in 1995 and 1996) in 1998. GLQIC-D has been serving HS programs in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin (Department of Health and Human Services Region V) since 1976. The GLQIC-D began serving Early Head Start (EHS Waves I and II) programs in Region V in 1995. At that time, the GLQIC-D began gathering annual information about EHS programs, children with disabilities, and training and technical assistance (T/TA) needs of EHS staff.

In this paper, information is presented about these 18 EHS Waves I and II programs in Region V. The survey probed the following areas: (1) preferred types of training and technical assistance for EHS staff, (2) issues/concerns and challenges EHS staff are facing, (3) types of disabilities served in EHS, and (4) the adaptations needed to provide services to children with disabilities. Historical perspectives of EHS, the concept and rationale of EHS, and recent issues of EHS are discussed in the next section.

Early Head Start

Early Head Start is a fully federally funded, community-based, comprehensive early childhood program designed for low-income pregnant women and families with infants and toddlers under age 3. Extracting some significant experiences and lessons from existing HS programs, EHS has implemented a simple, clear, and insightful mission from the beginning, which included the four cornerstones: (1) child development, (2) family development, (3) community-building basics, and (4) staff development (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [DHHS], 1994). In order to ensure high-quality programming and to enhance the optimal development of infants and toddlers by building a strong relationship with parents, EHS has a formidable agenda. The federal commitment to EHS includes the provision of training and technical assistance, the implementation of Head Start Program Performance Standards (Head Start Bureau, 1996), and monitoring for high-quality programs, research and evaluation, and service coordination at the regional and national levels. In this section, four major bodies of literature are reviewed: (1) the history of EHS, (2) the importance of the first three years of life, (3) the legal impact of welfare reform on children with disabilities, and (4) strategies for staff training and technical assistance.

History of Early Head Start

When the Administration for Children, Youth, and Families (ACYF) in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) initiated EHS, a community-based early childhood program focused on providing high-quality support for families living in impoverished environments and a high-quality early childhood education for their very young children, EHS was defined as "a child development program that seeks to enhance the development of infants and toddlers by establishing strong partnerships with parents" (Lally & Keith, 1997, p. 3). When the Head Start Bureau initiated EHS in fiscal year 1995, 68 EHS grantees were funded nationally serving about 5,000 children and 345 families (Head Start Act, 1998). According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in fiscal year 1999, 525 EHS grantees were funded nationally, and the services have been provided to approximately 40,000 children (DHHS, 2000).

The concept of EHS was derived from the Head Start program. The purpose of EHS is to enhance children's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development; to enable parents to be better caregivers of and teachers to their children; and to help parents to meet their own goals, including that of economic independence (DHHS, 1994). To facilitate this effort, programs receiving EHS funding must build upon nine key principles: (1) high-quality care; (2) prevention and promotion; (3) positive relationships and continuity; (4) parent involvement; (5) inclusion; (6) culture; (7) comprehensiveness, flexibility, responsiveness, and intensity; (8) transition; and (9) collaboration (Lally & Keith, 1997).

The Importance of the First Three Years

The prenatal period and the first three years of life are the most critical period for facilitating healthy child growth and development in the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive areas. Biological outcomes and environmental factors must be taken into consideration for our youngest children. Ideally, all children from birth to age 3 should have a variety of experiences with their families in a peaceful, warm, positive, and safe environment.

Optimal environments for young children in the United States are not always possible because of domestic violence, drugs, and poor living conditions. Other social conditions, such as the increasing number of low-income and teenage parents who lack economic security, education, and knowledge about child rearing and development also make very young children vulnerable. Fortunately, some recent studies identify the elements of the effective programs that enhance both child and family development (DHHS, 1999). It is important to focus on what we want for children and how we can support families. Based on these social changes and demands, the federal office has developed regulations to support HS and EHS. The following section describes the major legal impact on children with disabilities in EHS.

Legal Impact on Children with Disabilities in Early Head Start

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997 (also called PL 105-17) were signed by President Clinton on June 4, 1997, and the Final IDEA '97 Regulations were released on March 12, 1999. The law legislates that states serve children with disabilities birth to 21 years of age. This law delineates the mandates regarding each specific age group. Part B outlines those ensuring services to individuals from 3 to 21. Part C (Early Intervention) outlines the services for young children, from birth to age 3. Just as in HS, EHS grantees are required to have at least 10% of their enrollment opportunities for children with disabilities and must actively recruit and enroll infants and toddlers with significant disabilities. In order to count toward the 10% mandate, the child must meet state-specific Part C eligibility criteria. This is facilitated by local interagency agreements. Early Head Start programs seek to build strong communities that serve the needs of all children and the inclusion of young children with disabilities and their families in their community. Early Head Start has many available resources. One of the supports is training and technical assistance (T/TA) funded by the Head Start Bureau in DHHS. The manner in which the T/TA system functions is presented in the following section.

Strategies of Staff Training and Technical Assistance

In order to provide additional training and technical assistance to EHS, the EHS National Resource Center (EHS NRC) was established in 1995. This center works with the 28 regionally funded Head Start Quality Improvement Centers (QICs) to provide T/TA to EHS. Information about disability services, program management/administration, health and nutrition, social services, facilities planning, and technical assistance services are coordinated and offered to both EHS and HS programs by these entities (Lally & Keith, 1997). Of the regionally funded QICs, 12 are called QIC-Ds and work only with disability issues. The GLQIC-D is one of these funded entities. Each Head Start QIC and QIC-D works cooperatively to ensure that all services are delivered in a comprehensive and integrated fashion to HS and EHS.

The GLQIC-D has historically gathered the information through annual needs assessments about T/TA needs of HS and EHS. The work of the GLQIC-D has been disseminated nationally through position papers, published reports, and articles in journals. Some examples of topics that the GLQIC-D staff have gathered information about are inclusion of children with disabilities (Kadota, Bennett, & Thomas, 1999a); service delivery in HS and EHS (Kadota, Bennett, & Thomas, 1999b); screening and assessment of children in HS, serving parents with disabilities in HS, and the impact of welfare reform on HS (Bhagwanji & Bennett, 1997); HS collaboration with child care (Bhagwanji & Bennett, 1998); challenging behaviors in children (Bennett & Deluca, 1995, 1996); writing interagency agreements (Buscemi, Bennett, Thomas, & Deluca, 1996); and the mental health of parents in EHS (Hojnar, Thomas, Stillwell, Bennett, & Allison, 1997). This information has been helpful in understanding the challenges that HS and EHS staff face in their everyday work in Region V. This paper summarizes the information gathered in 1998-1999 from 18 EHS programs in Region V.

Method

Procedures

A new protocol was designed to gather information from EHS about program demographics, census information, challenges, top-ranking issues, preferred types of training and technical assistance, types of disabilities served, and the amount of adaptation for children with disabilities. A letter of invitation was sent to the directors of the EHS programs funded in 1995 and 1996 (also referred to as EHS Waves I and II), asking them to complete a survey with input from other staff members. The survey for assessing EHS needs was distributed to 26 EHS programs in November 1998. All surveys returned by March 15, 1999, were used in compiling this paper. The surveys were mailed out to 26 programs with a cover letter with a self-addressed stamped envelope for return.

Instrumentation and Data Analysis

In order to develop a new protocol, multiple resources were reviewed, including the *Head Start Program Information Report* (PIR) (Head Start Bureau, 1999), Head Start Program Performance Measures Second Program Report (DHHS, 1998a), Head Start Performance Standards (Head Start Bureau, 1996), Head Start Act (1998), and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (1997). Also, GLQIC-D's annual survey studies from past years (e.g., Kadota, Bennett, & Thomas, 1999a, 1999b) were reviewed. Informal discussions were held with EHS program staff. The three-page survey contains six major sections: program demographics, census information, challenges/top-ranked issues, preferred types of training and technical assistance, types of diagnosed disabilities, and the amount of adaptation rate for children with disabilities. Answers to questions were by number, check mark, and lists. Additional spaces for comments were provided at the end of each section.

Two new sections were added to the survey at this time. One was a cross-reference check sheet. On the cross-reference check sheet, six major categories (e.g., General, Service Delivery, Child Issues, Welfare Reform, Family Issues, and Staff Issues) were determined based on the previous years' findings. Then, by utilizing five T/TA support types (e.g., Phone-TA, Onsite TA, Distance Learning, College Credit, and Resource Library), a check sheet demonstrating the categories of needs and T/TA types was designed.

A section was developed in which EHS staff could also rate the amount of adaptation needed to serve children with disabilities. Early Head Start staff were asked to list examples of the disabilities of children enrolled in their program. Respondents were asked to rate the amount of adaptation for an individual child with a disability. The rating scale was 1 to 5. The number 5 indicated the highest amount of adaptation, and the number 1 denoted the least amount. Respondents were also asked to give the number of these children.

Data Analysis

Because of the sample numbers ($n = 18$), most of the numerical data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, proportion/percentage, means, and standard deviation. All the data in this paper are presented as totals for Region V. These data were compared with other existing national reports (see the discussion section). The data were also portrayed in various graphic forms accompanied by explanatory notes.

Findings

Program Demographics

Surveys were sent to 26 EHS programs; 18 programs participated in the survey. The return rate was 69.2%. With regard to hours of operation of EHS, the mean times were 7:34 a.m. for opening and 5:19 p.m. for closing. Mean hours open per day were 9.75. Six programs reported providing services for 8-8.5 hours a day. However, half of the programs reported extended and flexible hours. Seven programs (41.2%) reported their program location as large, and five (29.4%) reported their location as small. No program reported its primary focus as center based (CB). Eight programs reported focusing on both center and home based (CB&HB), and eight other programs reported focusing only on home based (HB). Two programs reported focusing on home based and other (e.g., community child care, or play group).

Census Information

Eighteen programs reported serving 1,195 children (birth through age 3). All EHS programs offered the HB option, often in combination with CB. This CB option usually was offered within EHS itself or in collaboration with community agencies, such as child care. From the data on HB, CB&HB, and HB and other centers programs (*n* = 18), each home visitor had a caseload of 6-10 families.

Information regarding families receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Child Care Assistance or Subsidies (CCA) was gathered. SSI assists families with a child with a disability. CCA is used to support a child for parents who are beginning job training or work. Eighteen programs reported 124 families (15.6%) receiving CCA only, 14 families (1.8%) receiving both CCA and SSI, and 53 families (6.7%) receiving SSI only. This information is useful in ascertaining the effect of welfare reform.

In terms of training and educational background of EHS staff members, there were 155 people with a degree (master's, bachelor's, or associate) or CDA credential. Bachelor's degrees were the most prevalent, followed by master's degrees, the CDA credential, associate degrees, and others. As to the major fields studied by EHS staff members, 108 people reported having some specialization: for example, 16.7% had an early childhood background, 5.6% were in early childhood special education, and 15.7% studied the field of child development.

Training and Technical Assistance Needs

The response to the section "Training and Technical Assistance Needs" revealed the areas in which EHS programs were challenged and the types of assistance preferred (e.g., Phone-TA, On-site TA, Distance Learning, College Credit, and Resource Library).

In response to the most important training and technical assistance needs, EHS programs reported "Teenage Parents" as most important, "HSFIS (Head Start Family Information System)" was second, and "Family Involvement" was third. "Teenage Parents" appeared in every category (some ranked 2 or 3), implying that it is the most challenging issue. Data indicated that the programs needed assistance on HSFIS. This came up under the category of Phone TA, On-site TA, and Distance Learning. Programs showed their interest in learning about prenatal issues through Distance Learning, College Credit, and Resource Library.

Regarding the types of assistance, On-site TA (*n* = 75) was the most popular strategy for programs, whereas College Credit (*n* = 7) was the least popular assistance among the programs. This result may suggest reduced awareness of College Credit as a method for training.

Children with Diagnosed Disabilities

On the last page in the survey, 259 of 1,195 children (21.7%) were reported as having some kind of disability. The top three diagnosed disabilities were (1) Speech and Language Delay (18.7%), (2) Asthma (14.0%), and (3) Communication Disorder (9.6%).

EHS staff were asked to give the number of children and rate from 1 through 5 (with 5 indicating the most and 1 the least) the amount of adaptation the program must make for a specific child with a disability. Among 259 children, no adaptation rate was given for 25 children with disabilities. The ratings 1-5 have been collapsed so that a rating of 4 or 5 represents severe, 3 is moderate, and 1 and 2 are mild. About 81.1% of children in EHS programs were mildly disabled and needed little adaptation. Very few children received a rating of 5. The children who received this rating were often medically fragile. Examples of children who required a rating of 4 for adaptation were those with Down syndrome and autism. Examples of children who required moderate (rating 3) adaptation were health impairment/hydrocephalus, Down syndrome.

One of the difficulties for EHS was to distinguish the type of disability. Many EHS programs listed various types of disabilities that could be categorized as either developmental delay or at-risk. Because the states have different systems of categorizing children under Part C of IDEA, labels such as developmental delay were indicated under diagnosed disabilities as well as children at-risk. About 31.8% of the EHS programs reported serving children who were at-risk. In terms of the adaptation, none of these children received a rating of 4 or 5 (severe) on the adaptation category. With these disabilities (e.g., developmental delay or at-risk), EHS staff perceived that 37.7% of children in EHS programs were mildly disabled and 28.1% of children were moderately disabled.

Discussion

In order to interpret the findings of the GLQIC-D study, it is important to discuss a study carried out by the National Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project (NEHSREP). In 1997, the NEHSREP collected data on 17 EHS programs and examined program characteristics and early implementation experiences. In December 1999, the first major executive summary report on this implementation, *Leading the Way: Characteristics and Early Experiences of Selected Early Head Start Programs, Volume I & II Executive Summary* (hereafter referred to as *Leading the Way*), was published by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS, 1999). Unlike the PIR data, types of protocols were not identified, and numerical data were not specifically presented in this publication. However, the general description provides broad information about the 17 EHS programs. As the sample number and contents in *Leading the Way* are similar to the GLQIC-D study, *Leading the Way* was utilized as a major resource for comparing data. In addition to *Leading the Way*, the Head Start *Statistical Fact Sheet* (DHHS, 1998b) and the PIR (Head Start Bureau, 1999) were used as additional resources for comparison.

Using the three major sources of data noted above to compare with GLQIC-D data, several themes were identified. Based on the findings, the following four themes appear as highlights of this study: (1) program options in EHS, (2) home visitors' caseloads, (3) EHS staff qualifications, and (4) proportion and types of disability.

Early Head Start Programs Offer Combination Options

In 1995, the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families (ACYF) awarded 68 EHS programs in 34 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico to serve more than 5,000 children under age 3. In 1996, 74 new EHS programs were selected to serve an additional 5,000 children and their families in 8 additional states. According to the PIR (Head Start Bureau, 1999), there are 260 EHS programs in all 50 states and in the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, and 33,288 children under age 3 are served in the programs. About double that number have been funded to date, with the possibility of many more EHS programs to be funded in the future.

The numbers of EHS programs with a primary focus described as center based (CB), home based (HB), or combination (CB&HB) and children served at each EHS program were not separated out by the PIR (Head Start Bureau, 1999). Unfortunately, since the actual number of CB EHS programs is not in the PIR data, comparisons among numbers of EHS primary services are difficult. The current study found that, among 18 EHS programs in Region V, no programs reported their primary focus as center based (CB) only.

There are four options that EHS programs may offer to families and communities: (1) HB only, (2) CB only, (3) combination of HB and CB, and (4) locally designed options. For locally designed options, EHS may partner with community child care (either family or center based). The Head Start Bureau and the Region V office have instructed EHS programs to offer center based as an option. The major objectives of EHS are to be a family-centered and community-based program and to respond to the diverse needs of each local community and their children and families (Head Start Bureau, 1996). To meet these objectives, EHS must be a flexible program. Flexibility should be determined by the results of the community needs assessment. Community needs should guide the options offered to families. As *Leading the Way* (DHHS, 1999) states, "These changes in approach resulted from subsequent funding decisions, shifts in families' needs, and recommendations of technical assistance providers" (p. 6). Communities change and, therefore, so do EHS programs. Further research could explore how the EHS program interprets community needs assessment information and family needs and pursues setting up options, how children's disabilities are considered, and what issues are important for families.

Home Visitors' Caseloads

Caseload refers to the number of families per home visitor. In the GLQIC-D study, each home visitor had a caseload of 6-10. This number was lower than the reported caseload in *Leading the Way* (DHHS, 1999), which was 10-15, and those shown in PIR

(Head Start Bureau, 1999), which were 38.04 families per home visitor in the HS programs in Region V and 35.08 in the nation. The data illustrate that EHS in Region V seems to have an adequate number of home visitors to support children served in HB programs and their families. This finding could also relate to the proportion of children with disabilities (21.7%) in the programs. The more children with disabilities and their families served, the more support may be needed. An important question for future research would be "what are the additional responsibilities of home visitors when dealing with children with disabilities and their families?"

Staff Qualifications

In this study, 18.7% of EHS staff had a master's degree and 49.0% had a bachelor's degree. Although EHS staff are not required to possess a bachelor's degree or above, about 67.7% of the teaching staff in this study had this degree. Compared with *Leading the Way* (Head Start Bureau, 1999), the staff educational background in Region V is relatively high.

Staff specialization covers many fields in addition to early childhood education, such as adult education, social services, and counseling. Since the age range of the children is from birth to 3 and EHS programs have a mission to support pregnant women and low-income families, EHS programs may prefer to have a variety of personnel with varied backgrounds. Unfortunately, no comparison is available because there are no data for EHS programs presented in the PIR (data for HS were available) or *Leading the Way* on this matter.

Proportion and Types of Disabilities

The proportion of disabilities reported in *Leading the Way* (Head Start Bureau, 1999) was "at least 10%" in the majority of programs. Among the 17 research programs, 6 programs served about 15% of children with disabilities and another 6 programs served less than 10%. The total number of children served in EHS Region V was 1,195, with 21.7% of those children diagnosed as disabled ($n = 259$). This finding indicates that the EHS programs in Region V served children with disabilities more than Economic Opportunity Act Amendments (1972) mandated. This mandate ensured that 10% of enrollment opportunities will be given to children with disabilities (Economic Opportunity Act, 1972).

In addition, information about types of disabilities is also available in the GLQIC-D study. In terms of types of disability among the children, "Speech and Language Delay" (18.7%) appeared as the top diagnosed disabilities, followed by Asthma (14.0%) and Communication Disorder (9.6%). Although the same information for EHS programs is not presented in the PIR report, the data on "Number of children enrolled whose primary or most significant disability has been determined to be" for HS programs are listed (Head Start Bureau, 1999). These were "Speech or Language Impairments" as the most significant followed by "Non-Categorical/Developmental Delay" and "Health Impairment." Despite the different categorization utilized in the PIR (for HS programs) and GLQIC-D studies, a similar tendency was determined: "Speech and Language Delay" is listed as the most often served disability in both programs. This disability is generally seen as the least harmful label to give a child. This label may include children with behavior problems, learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and other conditions. It is difficult to ascertain details about the characteristics of children with disabilities in HS and EHS because of the definition of the "at-risk" category and because each state has its own eligibility criteria for Part C Early Intervention. These factors need to be taken into consideration when analyzing data across states. A factor to be noted is that several states in Region V have a broad "at-risk" category as a part of their Part C funding criteria for serving infants and toddlers. EHS programs in those states may appear to have higher percentages categorized as "Speech and Language Delay"; however, consideration must be taken of the state-specific "at-risk" definitions.

Implications

Issues of Greatest Concern to EHS Programs

The EHS programs were asked to put their "Top Five Issues" among the 35 items listed in the survey. The highest concern for EHS programs was "Teenage Parenting." According to the *State of America's Children*, "One in eight of America's children was born to a teenage mother" (Children's Defense Fund, 1999, p. xi). The teenage birth rate in the United States has been slowly declining steadily since 1991, but it still remains high (March of Dimes, 2000).

Teens may have inadequate eating habits and may take drugs, drink alcohol, or smoke. All of these factors may affect the infant and increase the risk of having a child with health problems. For example, if a teenager eats poorly, she may not gain an adequate amount of weight, which increases the risk that the baby will be born with a low birth weight. In 1997, 9.5% of teen mothers (ages 15 to 19) had an infant under 5.5 pounds, which is considered a low birth weight baby. Among teen mothers, the younger the mother, the more likely she is to have a low birth weight baby (e.g., 10.3% of mothers ages 15 through 17 years old had low birth weight babies, compared with 9.1% of mothers ages 18 to 19.4 (March of Dimes, 2000)). In some states, a child of a teenage mother is more likely to be labeled as at-risk or possibly disabled (March of Dimes, 2000).

EHS staff must deal with the everyday situations of young mothers and their children. To help in this area, many programs have requested assistance from the T/TA network and other local experts in their area. Challenges that require assistance may range from communication techniques with teen parents to family issues, such as domestic violence or substance abuse.

Types of Assistance the EHS Programs Preferred

The data indicated that EHS programs want varying types of training and technical assistance depending on their needs. For example, they might be likely to seek information on "Family Issues," such as Teenage Parent or Family with Substance Abuse Issues through On-site TA or Distance Learning. EHS staff noted that "Child Issues" (e.g., child health, nutrition, and safety) can be learned with College Credit. EHS staff preferred to learn about different topics through diverse methods.

Early Head Start Staff's Perceptions of Children with Disabilities

This study focused on the perception of the Early Head Start staff regarding severity of an individual child's disability and the resulting amount of adaptation required. The results of this tabulation have been discussed previously in this paper. Most EHS staff either did not interpret the children's diagnosed disabilities as severe or very few children with more severe disabilities were enrolled. In order to adapt settings for children with disabilities, the assessment of individual developmental differences is important. Future research could investigate the variables a staff member uses to rate the amount of adaptation for a child with a disability.

Conclusion

The findings of this study are important for those providing training and technical assistance to EHS. The most challenging issue for EHS was working with teenage parents. EHS staff were aware of many methods for T/TA. These topics and methods of delivery were outlined in this paper. We hope this information can assist T/TA providers in better understanding the challenges and concerns of EHS staff. Staff qualifications and detailed information regarding children with disabilities were presented. In addition, how staff perceived the adaptation of individual children with disabilities was indicated by a 5-point-scale rating system. Suggestions for further research were given.

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Looking Back—And Looking Ahead

Teachers' Beliefs and Teaching Beliefs

James Raths

Abstract

On the premise that teacher education programs, with their emphasis on methods, are largely ineffective in improving current teaching practice, this paper examines ways teacher educators can change some of the beliefs of teachers and teacher candidates early in a program so as to optimize the impact of learning new teaching practices. Three central questions are addressed—what technologies are available to teacher educators for changing candidate beliefs, what ethics come into play concerning changing the beliefs of candidates, and what beliefs should we teach—and the problems posed for changing beliefs. The paper then explores the concept of "dispositions," suggesting that if teacher educators could conceptualize the problem as one of "weak dispositions" rather than one of "beliefs," many of the issues would disappear. Three possible dispositions are explored as goals for a teacher education program: knowledge, colleagueship, and advocacy.

This essay is based on the premise that teacher education programs are largely ineffective in improving the current practice of teaching. Some programs choose not to improve practice, but instead they strive to prepare teachers who fit into the patterns of current practice. These programs hire practicing teachers to offer methods courses and discourage teacher candidates from studying foundations courses that can serve as a springboard for questioning current ways of teaching. But many of us in the field of teacher education aspire to improve current practice, confident that no matter how effective current practice might be in some schools or in some classrooms, it offers room for improvement. If this premise is correct, it begs the question "Why aren't we more successful?"

Many years ago, Zeichner and Tabachnick (1981) advanced one explanation—namely that the thousands of hours that prospective teachers spend as pupils in the classroom shape their beliefs. These conservative beliefs remain latent during formal training in pedagogy at the university and become a major force once the candidate is in his or her own classroom.

Subsequently, Kennedy (1997) attributed this state of affairs in part to the beliefs that candidates and teachers bring to teacher education. It is not clear what the source of those beliefs might be—a product of their upbringing, a reflection of their life experiences, or a result of socialization processes in schools. Nevertheless, teachers and teacher candidates have strong beliefs about the role that education can play, about explanations for individual variation in academic performance, about right and wrong in a classroom, and many other areas. Kennedy asserts that these beliefs are used to evaluate the new ideas about teaching that teachers and teacher candidates confront in their methods classes. Those teachings that square with their beliefs are recognized and characterized as "what's new?" Teachings that challenge their beliefs are dismissed as theoretical, unworkable, or even simply wrong.

Kennedy went on to say that one belief that teacher candidates bring to their professional schooling is "that they already have what it takes to be a good teacher, and that therefore they have little to learn from the formal study of teaching" (p. 14).

Bruner (1996) made a similar and related point. He argued that most people have acquired what he calls a "folk pedagogy" that reflects certain "wired-in human tendencies and some deeply ingrained beliefs" (p. 46). This view leads to what Bruner called a new and even revolutionary insight: "[Teacher educators], in theorizing about the practice of education in the classroom, had better take into account the folk theories that those engaged in teaching and learning already have" (p. 46).

If Zeichner, Tabachnick, Kennedy, and Bruner are right, perhaps teacher educators need to take on the task of changing some of the beliefs of teachers and teacher candidates early in a program so as to optimize the impact the program may have on learning new teaching practices. There may be an even more urgent reason for addressing the problem of changing beliefs. Research on attribution theories demonstrates that the attributions that teachers make to their pupils who are doing poorly may reflect their beliefs but also hinder their effective interventions with pupils. So, academic failure often is attributed to external factors in the child's life—the home, the family, the peer group—rather than reflecting on problematic teaching. Pupils in our schools who are the targets of attributions that narrow the ways in which their learning problems are addressed are victims, one might say, of teacher belief systems. Here is a second reason why changing the beliefs of teachers and teacher candidates should be high on the agenda of teacher educators.

Three Central Questions

What Technologies Are Available to Teacher Educators for Changing Candidate Beliefs?

Before addressing this question, it is appropriate to get an understanding about the size of the challenge. It has been long understood that some beliefs are more important than others to individuals, and the more important the belief is, the more difficult it is to change (Rokeach, 1968, p. 3). It is also understood that if a central belief is changed, other beliefs within the person's belief system are affected. It has been argued that beliefs that are linked closely to their ego—sense of self—are more important than any others (Rokeach, 1968, p. 4). One can only wonder how many supervisors have convincingly said to their student teachers, "I'm not criticizing you, I'm criticizing your teaching." It seems very likely that beliefs about teaching are very central beliefs and as such resist change.

Another line of research that supports this view is that of Markman (1989) in the area of language development. She argues that "very young children are capable of forming object categories that are so stable, available, habitual, and familiar that they achieve special status. These basic categories resist change." It is possible that some of the basic "concepts" that all children acquire having to do with justice, learning, and even teaching are learned early and as "basic concepts," in Markman's terms, are difficult to change. In my work with first- and second-year teachers at the University of Delaware, I have collected a number of "autobiographies" in which these teachers tell of their first awareness of teaching as a possible career. It is interesting to note how many speak of "loving to teach" at age 6. Here is a story that reflects many others: "When I returned home from first grade, I would go to my bedroom and line up all my dolls as pupils. Then, I would teach them a lesson. I loved being a teacher, and it was especially enjoyable because my dolls were so well behaved."

This teacher and many of her colleagues reported "learning how to teach" in this manner. It is possible that the beliefs about teaching, learned at an early age, were both linked to a sense of self and were "basic" in Markman's sense—making them extremely difficult to change. Tatto's (1996) important work on beliefs concluded "lay cultural norms [beliefs] among enrollees [in teacher education] are strongly ingrained and that most teacher education, as it is currently structured, is a weak intervention to alter particular views regarding the teaching and management of diverse learners" (p. 155). With this caveat, it is time to review the technologies available to us.

Belief as Criterion for Admission. In a sense, avoiding the challenge, we could change the profiles of our candidates' beliefs by having at least one of the criteria used to admit candidates into teacher education be that of holding the beliefs the faculty has identified as important. Would medical schools accept candidates who did not believe in the germ theory or the scientific method? Would dental schools accept candidates who did not believe in novocaine?

Confronting the Candidate with Dissonance. Dissonance theory suggests that if we engage teacher candidates in activities that arouse dissonance—beliefs might change (Festinger, 1957). One of the sources of dissonance identified by Festinger is "past experience" colliding with new cognitions. It is this source that is perhaps most relevant to teacher education. Of course, there are other standard responses to dissonance—one of which is to discredit its source. Some of the harsh things that are said or felt about teacher educators might well be understood as responses to dissonance. If dissonance is going to be effective, teacher educators will need to address their own and their program's attributes that make it easy to dismiss what is being taught. Perhaps, for instance, professors should all be successful, experienced classroom teachers so candidates cannot ask derisively, "when was the last time you were in a classroom?"

Apprenticeship Experiences. In apprenticeships, "novices and experts are from different worlds and a novice gets to be an expert through the mechanism of acculturation into the world of the expert" (Farnham-Diggory, 1994, p. 466). We have used apprenticeships in teacher education since the beginning, perhaps expecting that in the acculturation process, our candidates will "catch" the correct beliefs (Farnham-Diggory, 1994). Of course, this hope will be realized only if we place our candidates in settings that activate the targeted beliefs. There is some hope that the culture of the Professional Development Schools, as envisioned by the Holmes Group (1995), will work as a positive force in the acculturation of our teachers. The data are not yet in on this question.

Promoting Professional Development. One could argue that primitive and naive beliefs, "folk pedagogy" in Bruner's terms, reflect developmental stages. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) describe various "ways of knowing" that they consider "developmental." Teacher educators could work with their candidates to promote advancement to higher-level stages. Unfortunately, in their case studies describing how people moved from one stage to another, no systemic interventions seemed to operate. Instead, each person studied had a story about what prompted a change in the way he or she "knew," but nothing that seemed to give insight to teacher educators.

Values Clarification. L. E. Raths advocated a theory of values that suggested people hold beliefs when they are not fully examined. Only after they are examined and re-accepted after considering alternatives, anticipating consequences, and trying out their implication in life itself can a belief become a value. His procedures for moving beliefs to the category of "values" was called "values clarification" (Raths, Harmin, & Simon, 1966). In the few experiments carried out at the college level, advocates of values clarification found that the process was slow and not always successful.

Case Study. In her doctoral thesis written at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, McAninch (1993) posited an interesting hypothesis. She advanced the notion that if teacher education candidates were to study cases of instruction through different lenses—the lens of their own beliefs, of constructivism, of direct instruction, and of the project method—changes in belief systems might develop. McAninch derived her hypotheses mainly from the work of Joseph Schwab (1978) who described the process of examining phenomena with different lenses as "polyfocal conspectus." McAninch also built on the work of Belenky et al. cited above. While her ideas seem promising, McAninch's hypotheses have not been formally tested.

None of these approaches is easy or quick. If they did work, and if they were feasible, and if they were ethical, the interventions would probably take considerable time, with the exception of the first one.

What Ethics Come into Play Concerning Changing the Beliefs of Our Candidates?

What are the ethics involved in making a concerted effort to change the beliefs of another person? During the Korean War, such efforts on the part of the Russians and North Koreans to alter the political beliefs of American soldiers who were being held as prisoners of war were well known. While there was always a threat of physical punishment and other deprivations, the brainwashing techniques were often a combination of some of those suggested above—dissonance, social pressures, and immersion in a new culture. POWs were inundated with "facts" about injustices in the United States, how rich people were benefiting from the war, and how the capitalist system had many contradictions and problems. While such efforts were generally seen as obscene and decidedly "un-American," American universities on occasion ask professors and administrators who are accused of sexism or racism to attend "sensitivity" classes to improve their attitudes and presumably their practices. Even now, 50 years later, any effort to alter the beliefs of audiences or individuals is frequently characterized as "another form of brainwashing." There is something inherently wrong with working to change the beliefs of others, especially from a position of power.

On the other hand, we have felt open to teaching people skills. The wonderful thing about skills is that people who learn them may, because of their belief systems or other reasons, elect not to use them. While brainwashing implies fashioning some permanent and decisive thinking patterns in the minds of teacher candidates, skills are far more external—to be used or not at the whim of the learner. This relaxed attitude about "skills" is reflected as well in our willingness to disclose our skills or to ask others to disclose their skills. Some people would surely object if a teacher took a poll of his class concerning their beliefs about abortion, about race in America, or the nonavailability of health insurance for so many poor people. But to quiz them on their skill in taking a square root, or in asking higher-level questions, or computing the reliability of a teacher test is another matter. This distinction between teaching values and teaching skills prompted Bereiter (1973) to write a book titled *Must We Educate?* The thesis of the book is that public schools should not educate, that is deal with beliefs, but should only train—work with skills.

Why are we willing to uncover our skills but reluctant to share our beliefs? Perhaps it has something to do with the idea that skills represent only a capacity to act, while beliefs reflect dispositions to act. And it is one's dispositions that are at the heart of our personhood. In sum, there are difficult ethical questions to answer if we are going to systematically go about changing the beliefs of teacher candidates.

What Beliefs Should We Teach?

If we decided that we knew how to change beliefs and if we decided that it was ethically appropriate to change the beliefs of teacher candidates when and if certain conditions were met, the next question becomes "which beliefs" do we want to teach? For example, we could ask candidates to respond to the following beliefs (or others, mine are just examples) on a Likert scale, from strongly agree to strongly disagree. How would we want our candidates to respond at the end of the program? Notice how some "ideals," notably items 4 and 5, appear to be contradictory:

1. All children can learn.
2. Pupils should be treated as clients.
3. Children have to be prepared to "read up to grade level."
4. Children should be treated equally, as a matter of justice.
5. Children should be treated differently, each in terms of his own needs and interests.
6. Learning should be fun.
7. Diversity in a classroom is a strength and not a problem.
8. The teacher is accountable for what is learned or not learned in a classroom.
9. Children should be given praise and recognition in terms of what they have earned and deserve.

Another approach to characterizing the beliefs of our candidates is asking them to respond to the following items taken from Tatto's (1996) interesting work:

1. When pupils are successful in achieving intended goals or objectives, that success is often attributed to one of the following sources (see below). Which do you believe is the most powerful determinant of success? Circle the letter of your choice.
   a) Pupil home background
   b) Pupil intellectual ability
   c) Pupil enthusiasm or perseverance

d) Teacher attention to pupil interests and abilities
e) Teacher use of effective teaching methods
f) Teacher enthusiasm and perseverance

2. When pupils fail to achieve intended school goals or objectives, the failure is often attributed to one of the following sources (see below). Which do you believe is the most powerful determinant of school failure? Circle the letter of your choice.

a) Pupil home background
b) Pupil intellectual ability
c) Pupil enthusiasm or perseverance
d) Teacher attention to pupil interests and abilities
e) Teacher use of effective teaching methods
f) Teacher enthusiasm and perseverance

It is likely that reliable measures could be obtained if these items were offered in a paired-comparison format—asking candidates to choose "which one of each pair" is the more powerful.

I am trying to suggest that arriving at a set of beliefs in which a faculty group believes and that are considered so important that it is decided that all candidates should acquire them is almost impossible to imagine. So even if we had the technology available to us for changing beliefs, and even if we agreed that it was ethical to change the beliefs of our candidates, deciding on which particular beliefs to advance in our program would be difficult. In sum, in spite of the insights of Zeichner through Bruner cited above, changing candidates' beliefs looks like a hopeless task.

Shifting the Focus

The previous paragraphs suggest in the main a dead end here. If our candidates have beliefs that interfere with their learning new ideas about teaching and learning, and if those beliefs can actually do harm to their pupils, certainly we are obliged to change them. But a review of the technologies available to us is not promising. We are not sure which are "better" beliefs, and if we knew, we do not have a way of changing them.

Lilian Katz offers us an insight that may lead us out of this conundrum. She introduced to the field the notion of "dispositions" (Katz & Raths, 1985). In her framework, beliefs can be considered "pre-dispositions." She used the term dispositions as a summary of actions observed (p. 302). Perhaps we would benefit from changing our focus away from beliefs per se to "dispositions." It may be more tolerable to say to our candidates and to ourselves, "we mean to strengthen certain dispositions in our candidates' repertoire"—dispositions that almost surely already exist in our candidates. We would not be in the business of change—but of "strengthening." The dispositions might include:

1. Making setting attributions and not trait attributions.
2. Making efforts to meet children's needs.
3. Working to clarify children's ideas instead of judging them.
4. Rewarding approximations.

It is surely the case that these few examples are grounded in beliefs that are not made explicit. However, if we adopted the notion of "dispositions" as the frame for our goals, we could ask that our candidates behave in ways consonant with these dispositions or others we might select, regardless of what they "believed" about them.

There is a problem with my listing—the entries constitute a collection and not a set. It would be so much better, from a conceptual standpoint, if we had thoughtful categories to prompt our identification of dispositions. Here is an attempt to make the selection of the dispositions we plan to strengthen into some sort of rationale.

A teacher is a professional. There are at least three elements that separate professional persons from those working in careers that are not professions. The first has to do with knowledge. Professionals not only act with knowledge, they value the knowledge they possess. One set of dispositions to strengthen in our candidates is to value knowledge. The second has to do with colleagueship. Professionals reach out to consult with one another, to unite in associations to advance professional goals, and to collaborate in the best interests of their clients. We could choose to strengthen dispositions on the part of our candidates to work with others to achieve common goals. A third general area associated with professions is that of advocating for clients in their care. For teachers, this advocacy means not only watching out for pupils assigned to their classes, but also for the poor, the disadvantaged, and the downtrodden in our communities. Ideally, professions are not guided by a profit motive. Instead, they are concerned with issues of justice, fairness, and the well-being of their clients and for others who may become clients. In this respect, professionals in all fields give their time and dedicate their concerns on behalf of their principal clients and for those in our society who are less fortunate. This third area, advocacy, could become another source of dispositions that we take on as goals.

Let me illustrate how this might work: Taking these categories as a starting point, consider the following dispositions we might take on as goals for a teacher education program:

Knowledge

1. Given a problem or issue, our candidates wonder about what the literature has to offer. They are disposed to look up references and read what research summaries have to say about the problem or issue. They demonstrate learning new ideas from books, pamphlets, professional journals, and from each other.
2. In discussing a problem or issue, our candidates use vocabulary in the field, not to distance themselves from pupils or parents, but to convey with precision the meanings they attach to phenomena.
3. Given a problem or issue, our candidates ask for the data that support potential solutions and ask what alternatives are available to consider.

Colleagueship

4. Our candidates associate with other colleagues in professional study groups, professional associations, and in unions for the purpose of solving problems, improving personal skills and understandings, and contributing to the betterment of society through joint actions.
5. Given a problem or issue, our candidates are disposed to seek help from colleagues, supervisors, administrators, and from other professionals in the community.
6. Given a problem or issue, our candidates raise questions about ethical principles and concerns.

Advocacy

7. Given a problem or an issue, our candidates are sensitive to notions of justice, fairness, and equity as they affect their own pupils and all pupils within the community.
8. When analyzing the behaviors of pupils or parents, our candidates initially look to "setting" factors rather than "trait" factors to account for the behavior.
9. In any and all experiences involving pupils or their parents, whether incidental or planned, teachers seek ways to transform them into educational opportunities.
10. Our candidates relate what is being taught to the lives and experiences of their pupils, teaching in ways that are sensitive to the contexts in which pupils live and with which they are familiar.
11. In relating to their own pupils, our candidates demonstrate that pupil views are important.

Of course, this set of dispositions is an example. A faculty that adopted these dispositions or a similar set as goals would also need to teach other skills and understandings, some of which are prerequisites for these dispositions. One cannot have a disposition without an associated skill.

The advantages to aspiring to change the dispositions of our candidates seem to be the following. First, because dispositions are closely related to skills and practices, the focus seems to move away from the dicey topic of beliefs. Second, because dispositions can be written at a convenient level of abstraction, not "micro" and not "macro," teacher educators might more likely agree on a set as a focus for a particular program. Finally, dispositions can be strengthened by modeling and through apprenticeship experiences. Focusing on dispositions might be a way out of the dead end my analysis of the literature on changing beliefs suggests.

Summary

This paper cited authorities such as Kennedy (1997) and Bruner (1996) as asserting that the prior beliefs of teacher candidates can hinder learning about teaching. The implication that seems reasonable is that teacher educators must uncover and change particular beliefs that hinder the efficacy of teacher education. Next, problems associated with changing beliefs—technical problems, theoretical problems, and ethical problems—were cited. Finally, it was suggested that instead of conceptualizing the problem as one of "beliefs," if teacher educators would see the problem as one of dispositions, many of the issues would disappear. The reader must decide if that is the case.

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Note

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Last Class Notes

Lilian G. Katz

Abstract

This chapter contains thoughts on 23 issues that Lilian Katz has shared with her students during her teaching career. Topics covered include adults' attitudes toward children, teachers' professional development, equality, dispositions, the goals of education, the power of ideas, and the importance of striving for the well-being of all our children.

During my 31 years at the University of Illinois, I taught a graduate course titled Early Childhood Curriculum Trends and Issues. The topics included selected aspects of child development, the role of play in learning, parent-teacher relationships, curriculum models and teaching methods, and examination of research related to all of these matters.

I have long thought that a useful part of pedagogy at every level is to engage learners in a debriefing or summarizing process about the main issues that have been addressed in the class. Students were asked to write a final reaction paper indicating what topics and readings were more or less useful to them, considering their own unique backgrounds and professional roles and offering any suggestions they might have for my future teaching of the course.

At the last class of every semester, I also evaluated the semester in terms of what was accomplished or omitted, and I provided some reflections on the main points. During the first few years, the list of main points for the last class meeting was about a half-dozen. But over the years, the list grew to its present length. The list includes some professional, pedagogical as well as philosophical, principles that I hoped students would carry with them as they returned to their work. I hope they are useful to others as well.

We have lingered over many topics concerning children, parents, teachers, and curriculum issues. There is still much to learn about how to help all our children so that ultimately they can lead a "good life." As you return to your work, keep these main points in mind:

#1 Remember that adults know more about almost everything than a small child does—except what it feels like to be that child, and how the world makes sense to him or her. Those things are the children's expertise from which a teacher must learn—to be able to reach and teach them.

#2 Remember also that through their behavior children often ask us to help them become the kinds of persons we want them to be, because that is what they want to be. They want to be the kinds of persons we like—especially while they are still very young! We won't harm them by being clear about what we think is good, right, valuable, worth knowing, and worth understanding.

#3 Take care not to confuse what is exciting, amusing, and fun with what is educative. Excitement is appropriate for entertainment and special occasions; it is short-lived pleasure—easy come, easy go. But what is educative requires sustained effort and involvement, often includes many routine elements, and offers long-term deep satisfaction rather than momentary fun and excitement.

#4 Remember that learning and development take time—change may not! We can change behavior quickly by using threats and punishments; but when these are removed, there is no real development. And remember that it is very hard to grow around impatient people!

#5 Remember that meaningful relationships have to have *content*. Relationships cannot develop in a vacuum; people have to relate to each other *about* something that matters to the members of the relationship. The content of our relationships with children should not be mainly about rules, regulations, and conduct but about their increasing knowledge and developing understandings of those things within and around them worth knowing more about.

#6 In teaching, as indeed in life, we constantly make decisions. Every decision carries with it its own potential errors. There are probably no error-free decisions. So we have to think ahead about the possible errors embedded in each decision and then choose the "least worst errors!" In this sense, life is a series of choices of which errors we prefer.

#7 It is a good idea for all of us as teachers to seek a balance between sufficient skepticism to be able to go on learning and sufficient conviction to be able go on acting—for to teach is to act. And effective teaching requires optimal confidence in the rightness of our actions.

#8 As teachers, all we have at a given moment in a specific situation is our own very best judgment. Throughout our professional lives, we study and reflect in order to refine that judgment; we exchange with colleagues, consider others' solutions to the problems we face, examine the available evidence—all in order to improve our judgment. But in the last analysis, our very best judgment is all there is.

#9 Teaching involves many conflicting pressures and situations. We cannot respond fully or equally to all of them. We have to decide what is worth making an issue over. Don't make an issue over everything; a half-dozen issues will do! Select those issues that really matter to you. Then take your stand on them with clarity, confidence, and with courage—for the sake of the children.

#10 Cultivate the habit of speaking to children as people—people with minds—usually lively ones. Appeal to their good sense. It is not necessary to be sweet, silly, or sentimental at one extreme or somber, grim, or harsh at the other. Let us be genuine, direct, honest, serious, and warm with them and about them—and sometimes humorous too.

#11 The goal of education is not enjoyment; that is the goal of entertainment. The goal of education is to engage the mind of the learners so that their understandings of significant phenomena and events become deeper, clearer, and more accurate. When we succeed at engaging their minds, the learners find it enjoyable. But enjoyment cannot be our goal; it is more likely a side effect of good teaching.

#12 Cultivate your own intellect and nourish the life of your mind. For teachers, the cultivation of the mind is as important as the cultivation of our capacities for understanding, compassion, and caring—not less, not more—but equally important. In other words, see yourself as a developing professional; become a student of your own teaching—a career-long student of your own teaching.

#13 Respect your adversaries and resist the temptation to be defensive. Remember, whenever you respond defensively, it is partly because you believe the attack, or believe part of the attack; and when you are defensive, you are responding by the attacker's rules! Sometimes the attacker is right. But it seems best to respond professionally rather than personally. It seems to me that adversaries and enemies tend to become alike!

#14 Never take someone else's views or opinions of you or your work more seriously than you take your own! Take others' views seriously—there may be much to learn from them—but not more seriously than you take your own; for that is the essence of self-respect, and I believe that children benefit from being around self-respecting adults.

#15 I really believe that we cannot have optimal environments for children in preschools, child care centers, and schools unless the environments are also optimal for the adults who work with them and care for them. Certainly on some days what is optimal for the children will be obtained at the expense of the adults (like Halloween parties), and on other days, vice versa. But on the average, on a day-to-day basis, both the children and the adults must find their lives together satisfying, interesting, and worth living.

#16 Always assume that the people you work with have the capacities for greatness, creativity, courage, and insight. Occasionally, this assumption will be wrong, perhaps. But if you always make it, you will be much more likely to uncover, encourage, strengthen, and support these qualities in them.

#17 Never underestimate the power of ideas! Bad ones as well as good ones! Ideas are distinctly human creations, and if they were not powerful, many people would not have been imprisoned, exiled, assassinated, sent to Siberia, burned at the stake, executed, or crucified—because of their ideas.

#18 Identify as clearly as you can what your own assignment is, and what is yours to do, and do it as well and as wholeheartedly as you can. Don't waste time blaming history, tradition, politicians, administrators, parents, or any other category. In other words, avoid being caught in the "blame drain." We are with the children for such a short time and at such an important time in their lives. Make that time count by giving it all you have.

#19 I think the great struggle of our time—and no doubt for generations to come—is the struggle for *equality*. But we might ask: equality of what? People are not equally tall or musical or mathematical or athletic or beautiful; *but they are equally human!* They are equally human in the sense that they all have hopes and dreams and wishes and fantasies and aspirations and fears and doubts. They all want to be treated with respect and dignity and want to feel loved by someone. In these ways, it seems to me, all of the world's people are more alike than they are different!

#20 The struggle for equality is very much a struggle for the "good life," and the right to a good quality of life, and to the feeling that life is worth living, satisfying, and enriching. And it is the aesthetic dimension that accounts for the quality of our lives. As H. S. Broudy (1972) points out, aesthetics have to do with elaborations upon the basics, those elements of form, pattern, and texture above and beyond the simple instrumental and that serve to alleviate tedium. The aesthetic dimensions of experience transform caves into homes, running into dance, shouting into singing, growling into poetry, eating into dining, reproduction into romance—and those aesthetic dimensions mark the quality of our lives.

#21 I have tried to share my own views of what education is about. To me it is about developing certain dispositions in the young. These dispositions should include being reflective, inquisitive, inventive, resourceful, and full of wonder (wonder-full?), wonderment, and puzzlement. These dispositions should include the habits of searching for evidence; they should include also the dispositions to be tender, courageous, caring, compassionate. And they should include some humor as well! But I refer you to the definition of education provided by the British philosopher R. S. Peters:

> To be educated is not to have arrived at a destination; it is to travel with a different view. What is required is not feverish preparation for something that lies ahead, but to work with a precision, passion, and taste at worthwhile things that lie at hand (Peters, 1965, p. 110).

#22 It may be time to rephrase the ultimate goal of education, so that it is not driven by the notion that unless all our children grow up to be engineers, scientists, CEOs, doctors, and lawyers, etc., the education system has failed. Rather, the goal should be cast in terms of the proposition that whatever a child ultimately does for his or her life's work, and in whatever way he or she contributes to his or her communities, is not predetermined at birth by gender, race, ethnicity, or family income level. This is not an easy goal, but one that is more realistic than pushing all children to become rocket scientists.

#23 I really believe that each of us must come to care about everyone else's children. We must come to see that the well-being of our own individual children is intimately linked to the well-being of all other people's children. After all, when one of our own children needs life-saving surgery, someone else's child will perform it; when one of our own children is threatened or harmed by violence on the streets, someone else's child will commit it. The good life for our own children can only be secured if it is also secured for all other people's children. But to worry about all other people's children is not just a practical or strategic matter; it is a moral and ethical one: to strive for the well-being of all other people's children *is also right*.

Remember that whoever might be president of our country in 40 or 50 years is likely to be in someone's early childhood program today; and I hope she is having a good experience!

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Information Network, and a research assistant for an action research project in the Champaign, Illinois, public schools. Her research interests include mentoring teachers as they adopt the Project Approach.

Bev Clark, Ed.D., is the director of early childhood for the Lincoln Unified School District. She has more than 20 years of experience in Lincoln as a parent, aide, teacher, project coordinator, and director. Bev is responsible for bringing an Even Start native language (Khmer) preschool and seven state preschool programs to Lincoln, and through academic mentoring and after-school learning grants, the school day and school year have been redefined to expand services to children in the district. Bev was awarded a Title VII doctoral fellowship. Her thesis is a longitudinal study of first- and second-language acquisition.

Lorraine DeJong has been a member of the faculty in the Department of Education at Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina, since 1995. She received her Ph.D. in child development from Florida State University in 1997. Before coming to Furman, Lorraine was a public school teacher in Florida where she taught courses in child development for over 15 years. One of her most memorable teaching positions was acting as director of an early childhood program serving infant children of teenage parents for Leon County Schools in Tallahassee, Florida.

Darlene DeMarie is an associate professor of educational psychology at the University of South Florida in Tampa. She completed a Ph.D. in developmental psychology from the University of Florida (UF) and master's degrees in psychology (UF) and reading supervision (Ohio University). She cofounded and co-directed Muskingum College's Early Childhood Summer Training Institute (ECSTI) and served as faculty administrator of the college's Center for Child Development for 11 years. She also taught first grade, second grade, and elementary/junior high students with learning disabilities/behavior disorders. Her current research focuses on children's strategies for learning and children's experiences as reflected in their photography.

Diane Trister Dodge has been a leader in the field of early childhood education for over 35 years, directing local and national programs. She is an author of *The Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood* as well as numerous other books for parents and teachers. Diane is the founder and president of Teaching Strategies, Inc., a company that seeks to improve the quality of early chidhood programs by developing curriculum and providing staff development services. She holds a master's degree in early childhood education from the Bank Street College of Education. Diane is a well-known speaker and trainer.

Ellen Dodge has been a speech, language, and communication teacher for 16 years. She facilitates children's acquisition of communication skills necessary for social and academic success. She has published five books in the area of communication and presents workshops nationally. She received her bachelor's degree in speech-language pathology from SMU, and her M.Ed. from Southwest Texas State University.

Tom Drummond is an instructor in early childhood education at North Seattle Community College in Seattle, Washington. He has been examining the essentials of learning and teaching with videotape and audio recording for 30 years. Through collaborative inquiry into the events of teaching, he has developed ways for helping teachers discover for themselves the complexities of becoming effective facilitators of children's development. His videotape and collaborative activities have proved effective in helping early childhood teachers and caregivers improve both the quality of their professional practice and the experiences of children.

Barbara Dulik has 27 years of teaching experience in the elementary grades and as the founding director/teacher of the Early Learning Center at the Phillips Brooks School in Menlo Park, California. Her focus has always been on the importance of kindness, curiosity about the world around us, and the confidence to take chances and make mistakes. She has B.A. and M.A. degrees in elementary education from Stanford University. She attended the Winter Study Program in Reggio Emilia in February 1999.

Mary Jane Elliott, M.A., teaches 4-year-olds at the Hong Kong International School and is the current grade-level leader. Mary Jane has conducted numerous workshops on the Project Approach with teachers in the United States, Malaysia, and Hong Kong. She worked as an educational consultant in Taiwan and China. On three different occasions, she presented reflections on classroom experience with project work at NAEYC national conferences. An article focusing on highlights of project work was published in *Young Children.* Mary Jane is on the executive council of OMEP-Hong Kong and is actively engaged in promoting high-quality early childhood education.

Nancy File is an assistant professor of early childhood education at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. Her research interests focus on how teachers perceive their classroom roles with young children and interact to mediate their learning, and teacher preparation and professional development.

Lucia French received her Ph.D. in developmental psychology from the University of Illinois in 1980, studying with Ann Brown and J. McVicar Hunt. Post-doctoral study at CUNY with Katherine Nelson followed. Dr. French joined the University of Rochester faculty in 1983. Her basic research focuses on the relations between language and cognition during the preschool years. When Eastman Kodak invited Dr. French to develop a demonstration preschool program and curriculum to support school readiness, she shifted her focus to applied research and to the possibilities that educational environments offer for supporting early development.

Kathleen W. Glaser is principal of Hollywood Elementary School, which has an enrollment of 670 students in grades kindergarten to 5 and is located in St. Mary's County, Maryland. She recently received the *Washington Post's* Distinguished Educational Leadership Award and serves on the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Bay Schools Project advisory panel. Ms. Glaser has been a classroom teacher, resource teacher, staff developer, instructor for college courses in early childhood education, as well as an elementary principal for 17 years.

Mary Jo Graham completed her undergraduate work in child development at Michigan State University and received her doctorate in curriculum and instruction from Ohio University. She has taught in preschool and primary classrooms, supervised child care centers and resource and referral services, and developed a curriculum for child care apprentices prior to joining Marshall University, where she teaches early childhood courses.

Dominic Gullo is professor of early childhood education at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. He is interested in the relationship between preschool experiences and children's social and academic competence in kindergarten and primary grades. He consults nationally with school districts in early childhood education and assessment and serves on numerous national boards. Dom is the author of three books and two curricula, and has published widely in academic journals.

Jeanne Helm is assistant professor in child care and education at Richland Community College, Decatur, Illinois. Jeanne has a B.S. in education and a master's degree in early childhood education from Illinois State University. Jeanne has 20 years' experience in teaching the preschool child. She is a popular trainer and speaker in local child care centers and preschools, known for her fast-paced, practical, and participatory programs. Jeanne has worked with child care directors, teachers, and administrators—all with a common focus of child advocacy and education.

Anne Hunt currently teaches kindergarten at Park St. School in Fredericton. She has returned to the classroom after seven years at the Early Childhood Centre at the University of New Brunswick, where she was coordinator of the Initiative '91 teacher education program for kindergarten teachers. Most recently she was co-director of the Parenting for a Literate Community Project, where she took the lead with the children's program. Her writing and research interests include links between theory and practice, early literacy development, and home-school connections.

Gera Jacobs is an associate professor of early childhood at the University of South Dakota. She has a master's degree in early childhood special education and a doctorate in curriculum and instruction. She has worked for many years as a preschool teacher, kindergarten teacher, and elementary school teacher. She taught early childhood special education courses on two Native American reservations and currently teaches early childhood courses and supervises student teachers and practicum students at the University of South Dakota. She is involved in several early childhood organizations and serves as president of the South Dakota Association for the Education of Young Children.

Tamar Jacobson was born in Zimbabwe and traveled to Israel to become a kindergarten teacher with the Israeli Ministry of Education. In 1997, she completed a doctorate in early childhood education at the State University of New York at Buffalo. Currently, Tamar is director of the University at Buffalo Child Care Centers and adjunct faculty at SUNY at Buffalo. Dr. Jacobson is a member of the Professional Development Panel of NAEYC, co-president-elect of NYSAEYC, and presents extensively at regional, state, and national levels about appropriate practice, staff development, infants and toddlers, early childhood environments, and anti-bias curriculum.

Riyo Kadota is a doctoral candidate in early childhood education as an advisee of Dr. Bernard Spodek at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She is a native of Osaka, Japan, and came to the university to explore her interests in the nature of young children, teachers, schools, and communities through early childhood education in the United States. She has been working for the Great Lakes Quality Improvement Center for Disabilities for two years, conducting training and technical training needs assessment studies and developing research with Dr. Tess Bennett. Currently, she is working on her dissertation. The focus of her study is inclusion in Head Start programs in the Midwest regions.

Catherine M. Kearn graduated from Alverno College, Milwaukee, with a B.A. in elementary education and then taught elementary school for 13 years. She returned to school for nursery/preschool certification, then completed a master's in child care administration. Dr. Kearn has worked as an early childhood teacher, director, and administrator while also teaching teachers for a total of 27 years. She recently sold her center in order to spend more time advocating for children and to study for a doctorate in leadership for service and education. She recently completed her doctorate at Cardinal Stritch University. She is active in a number of state child care organizations.

Carol R. Keyes is a professor of education at Pace University and an early childhood consultant to the public schools. She began her career as a parent and then teacher/director in a cooperative nursery school. A founding member of the National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers, Inc., she was one of its early presidents. At Pace, Dr. Keyes has served as the chairperson of early childhood education and director of the Child Study Centers. Her scholarly work has focused on campus children's programs, children's transitions, teachers as researchers, and parent/teacher partnerships.

Sue Krolikowski is a doctoral student in early childhood education at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. She previously taught kindergarten and Title I reading in the Detroit public schools, and she has presented at national conferences. She is the author of "Building Bridges to Reading," a paper presented at an annual convention of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). She was also one of eight national winners of an essay contest about using trade books with children that was sponsored by NCTE and the Children's Book Council.

Jon Kulhanek has been an early childhood educator for 16 years. His focus is on the development of programs that value creativity, intrinsic motivation, and social collaboration within an emergent curriculum. He has a bachelor's degree in landscape architecture and master's of education in early childhood from the University of Minnesota. He attended the Winter Study Program in Reggio Emilia in 1999.

Betty Liebovich is a doctoral student in curriculum and instruction at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She holds an M.S. in human and community resources emphasizing child and family studies from the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point, and a B.A. in women's studies emphasizing child and family studies from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She has been a teacher of kindergarten and preschool, an owner/operator of a family child care facility, and an administrator for

Head Start. At the University of Illinois, she has served as an instructor for classes in rhetoric and parent involvement, and as a teaching assistant in the University Primary School.

Barbara Lowenthal is a professor of early childhood special education at Northeastern Illinois University. Her areas of expertise are in early special childhood education and learning disabilities. Dr. Lowenthal has coauthored two textbooks titled *Attention Deficit Disorders: Assessment and Teaching* and *Preschool Children: At Risk and with Disabilities*. She is a coauthor of a chapter in the *World Book* on attention deficit disorders and of an online presentation titled "Ask the Experts" sponsored by the Learning Disabilities Association. Dr. Lowenthal has published a number of articles in reference journals and presented widely in her areas of expertise.

Janey Marquez has a bachelor's in child development and has taken postgraduate classes at Pacific Oaks College in Pasadena. She has taught in Head Start, child care, and a high school vocational program. She has been an assistant director and a Head Start center director. Ms. Marquez currently is a child development manager with Southwest Human Development Head Start in Phoenix, AZ. After attending Project Approach training, she has developed and presented training there and in the community in emergent curriculum and the Project Approach. She has been following Gloria McGinty's development as a teacher for six years.

Gloria McGinty has been a teacher with Southwest Head Start for 12 years. She has an A.A.S. in early childhood education and a CDA, and she is working on her bachelor's degree. Ms. McGinty currently works in a partnership between Head Start and Phoenix College, which brings Head Start and the community college together to strengthen the collaboration between home and school. A visit to her classroom by Lilian Katz and a brief exchange about how she applied the children's interest into her curriculum sparked a change that is still in process. Today Gloria says, "In a sense, my students became the teachers and I, the student."

Jean Mendoza is a mother and doctoral student in early childhood education at the University of Illinois. She has been teaching children for more than 20 years. She teaches children's literature at the University of Illinois in the College of Education. Her scholarship is informed by her experiences as a parent and educator.

Andrea Michaelson holds a bachelor of science degree in environmental design from Art Center College of Design and a teacher certification for early childhood education from UCLA extension. Her prior study of architecture combined with extensive study in environmental, product, and graphic design have enabled her to offer a range of experiences to her classroom specifically suited to their curriculum, which help them to realize their learning goals. Ms. Michaelson has visited Reggio Emilia, attended many conferences, and done extensive research on early childhood practices. Ms. Michaelson has worked closely with Lisa Rosenthal at Seeds University Elementary School in designing curriculum for 5- to 7-year-olds.

Robert P. Moreno, Ph.D., is currently an assistant professor of applied human development in the Department of Human and Community Development at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He received his B.A. in psychology from the University of California, Los Angeles, and his Ph.D. in child and adolescent development in the School of Education from Stanford University. He has also served as an Illinois Cooperative Extension Service state specialist. His research examines familial influences on children's learning and academic achievement among Latinos and low-income families. He is currently a National Academy of Education/Spencer Fellow.

Pamela Nuttal Nason is a professor of early childhood education and curriculum theory at the University of New Brunswick. Her research centers upon the relationship between maternal thought and practice and professional thought and practice, particularly as it pertains to the development of literate communities. Most recently, she was co-director of the UNB Parenting for a Literate Community project for Health Canada and took the lead in the parent education component.

Debbie Noyes is an assistant professor of early childhood education at Greenville College in

Greenville, Illinois. She received a master's degree in early childhood education from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville and is currently a doctoral student at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Debbie previously taught first grade and pre-kindergarten. She has given many presentations on emergent literacy and the Project Approach. She was part of the group presentations on the Project Approach with Lilian Katz and Sylvia Chard at the NAEYC conferences in 1996 and 1998.

Barbara Parris is acting principal of Erdiston Teachers' Training College in Barbados. She holds a B.A. from the University of the West Indies and an M.Ed. in educational administration from the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education/University of Toronto. Mrs. Parris assumed the substantive post of deputy principal of the College in 1996, after having served as head of the business studies department of a secondary school. She is currently pursuing doctoral studies at the University of the West Indies, Barbados campus.

Karen L. Peterson is professor and coordinator of the Human Development Program at Washington State University Vancouver. Her Ph.D. in child development is from Iowa State University (1980), with M.S. and B.S. degrees from Texas Woman's University. Her professional interests include early childhood education (history, theory, and curriculum), teacher preparation, and higher education. Her experience with children has included full-day child care, Head Start, and university demonstration schools. The idea for "the invisible mentor" developed in response to observations of colleagues and friends attending the National Association for the Education of Young Children national meetings during the past 15 years.

Patricia Ragan, Ph.D., is a member of the faculty in the Professional Program in Education at the University of Wisconsin–Green Bay, where she serves as the early childhood coordinator. She completed her Ph.D. in infant and child development and has worked with children in public school classrooms, early intervention programs, and Head Start. She has served on several local and state advisory committees/task forces on early childhood, and she has written and coordinated numerous grants to support teaching and learning. Dr. Ragan is currently the program manager for a 3-year FIPSE grant to restructure early childhood teacher preparation.

James Raths graduated with a doctorate in research, evaluation, and statistics from New York University. He has since served on the faculties of a number of universities including the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, University of Maryland, University of Illinois, University of Vermont, and the University of Delaware. His research interests include the study of teaching and teacher education. For many years, Raths has been an executive editor of the *Journal of Educational Research*. Currently, along with his assignments as professor of education in the School of Education at the University of Delaware, he is working with the Teacher Education Accreditation Council as a member of its staff.

Debbie Reese, Ph.D., studied with Lilian Katz at the University of Illinois. Her research is on children's literature with a focus on representations of Native Americans in children's picture books. Reese has written for the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, and her work has appeared in *Early Child Development and Care, The Horn Book, School Library Journal,* and *Rethinking Schools*. She contributed a chapter to *A World of Babies*, the acclaimed book on parenting across cultures, published by Cambridge University Press. An award-winning teacher, she teaches children's literature at the University of Illinois. Reese, a Pueblo Indian from New Mexico, has taught in elementary schools in Oklahoma and New Mexico.

Lisa Rosenthal has been teaching 5- to 7-year-olds (K/1) for the past four years at Seeds University Elementary School (UES). This laboratory school on the UCLA campus is connected directly to the university's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. Prior to her experience at UES, she worked with 4-year-olds in a preschool whose program was inspired by the preschools in Reggio Emilia. Ms. Rosenthal was able to travel to Italy to observe and study those schools firsthand. She is currently working on a research project with UCLA professor of education Dr. Fred Erickson on documenting and communicating methodology.

Dianne Rothenberg is co-director of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education (ERIC/EECE), director of the Reading Pathfinder Project, PARENTS AskERIC, and the National Parent Information Network, and owner of several national electronic discussion lists in the areas of early, elementary, and middle level education. Ms. Rothenberg has authored a number of journal articles, book chapters, and conference papers on topics related to full-text information online, information technology, and early childhood education, and is the former editor of two nationally marketed newsletters: *MicroNotes on Children* and *Computers and Public Library Watch*. Ms. Rothenberg has been involved in online educational networking since the early 1980s. Ms. Rothenberg's research interests include information services for parents, obsolescence of the published literature, and the uses of information technology in education.

Claudia Shuster is associate professor and coordinator of early childhood education at Central Connecticut State University. She served as a fellow at the Bush Center in Child Development and Social Policy at Yale University from 1986-1989. She currently is the professional development school university facilitator in an elementary magnet school, where she is engaged in research on developing emotional intelligence in young children. As a consultant to the Connecticut State Department of Education, she is creating a sequential, developmentally based observational process for teachers to assess and plan for young children in the context of their daily classroom activities.

Patricia Steinhaus began her career in 1972 teaching 2-year-olds in a child care center in a housing project. After completing an M.S. at Northern Illinois University and serving as the center's director for two years, she took a sabbatical and started a family. In 1986, she began teaching prekindergarten and completed another master's degree at Southern Illinois University. In 1994, Ms. Steinhaus joined the Illinois State Board of Education as a consultant with the Early Childhood Division. She is presently an assistant professor at Chicago State University and is finishing her doctorate at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Dawn Thomas serves as the project coordinator and infant/toddler liaison for the Great Lakes Quality Improvement Center for Disabilities (GLQIC-D), located at the University of Illinois. She has worked with Head Start since coming to the university nine years ago and Early Head Start since its initial funding (Wave I), providing integrated service delivery for the grantees in collaboration with the Region V Quality Network (Q-Net). Dawn has presented nationally on such topics as collaboration, interagency agreements, and individualizing goals and objectives for children (birth to 5) in the context of the IEP/IFSP. Dawn enjoys the creative arts, particularly music and writing, and finds the expression of both to be beneficial and fruitful in every area of life.

Karen VanderVen is professor and past director of the Program in Child Development and Child Care at the University of Pittsburgh. Interests in early childhood education include dynamical systems theory and its applications; professionalization, including career, curriculum, and leadership development; play and activity; and lifespan and intergenerational issues. Her writings in these areas have been published in journals and edited books in the field. Recently, Dr. VanderVen completed a term as secretary of the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators. She serves on the editorial boards of six journals, is the author of over 200 publications on child-related issues, has received several national awards for her work in professionalizing practice with children and youth, and has presented all over the world.

Cheryl W. Van Hook is assistant professor of early childhood education at Ohio University. She is a graduate of the Child and Family Studies program at the University of Tennessee. She has experience working in the early childhood classroom, including university lab schools and Head Start, administering mentoring programs with young children, and developing curriculum for mentors. Her teaching and research interests include preparing teachers to develop creative experiences in the learning community and preparing teachers to develop an integrated curriculum that reflects the diversity of our world, promotes anti-bias, and is inclusive of all children.

Teresa Vasconcelos is a professor of early childhood education at the Escola Superior de Educacao do Instituto Politecnico de Lisboa. She was director for basic education at the Ministry of Education and coordinator of the Interministerial "Office for the Expansion and Development of Preschool Education" in Portugal. She started her career as an early childhood educator and completed postgraduate studies in educational supervision at Bank Street College of Education. Dr. Vasconcelos completed a Ph.D. in early childhood and elementary education at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, working and researching under the supervision of Lilian Katz, Daniel Walsh, and Bernard Spodek. She has been developing professional activities in the areas of initial, in-service, complementary, and higher graduate formation of teachers. She has developed research and published nationally and internationally around educational policies and curriculum and the practice of excellent early childhood education teachers. The book *Ao Redor da Mesa Grande: Pratica Educativa de Ana* came out of her Ph.D. work at the University of Illinois.

Thrity G. Vaswani is reader (i.e., associate professor), faculty of social work, Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda, India. Her bachelor's degree is in child development, and her master's degree is in social work. She has served in the field of children and family services for over 30 years, which includes educating nursery school teachers for village preschools and child and family welfare workers. She has published in American and Indian journals. Her scholarly work includes research projects on girls, parent-teacher associations, and elderly women. She has presented at national and international conferences in the United States, Austria, and Sri Lanka.

Sara Wilford, M.S., M.Ed., is director of the Early Childhood Center and Art of Teaching graduate program at Sarah Lawrence College, where she holds the Roy E. Larsen Chair in Psychology. In 1993, she was a delegate to the schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy, and, in 1996, a delegate to the U.S./South Africa Joint Conference on Early Childhood Education. She is a member of *CHILD* magazine's editorial advisory board and received an Outstanding Service Award from Westchester Community College in 1999. Her writings include *What You Need to Know when Your Child Is Learning to Read* (Scholastic, Inc., 1998).

Pam Whitty is an associate professor in early childhood and curriculum in the faculty of education at the University of New Brunswick. Her research and writing interests include children's early literacies, educational thought by and about women, and the integration of arts with literacy. Most recently, she has been involved in the UNB Parenting for a Literate Community Project and took the lead on the multimedia aspects of this project. Pam Whitty and Pam Nason have recently been awarded a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council grant titled "Emerging Literacies of Home, Family, and Community: Valuing the Literacies of Community Workers and Mothers."

Eunju Yun is a doctoral student in early childhood education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her advisor is Dr. Lilian Katz. She holds a bachelor's of education in elementary education and a master's of education in the philosophy of education, both from Korea. She was an elementary teacher in Korea before enrolling in the early childhood education program at Indiana University, Bloomington. Since coming to the University of Illinois, she has served as a graduate assistant to Dr. Katz at the annual conference on the Project Approach at Allerton Park. Her academic interest is in the social and moral development of children through the Project Approach.

Naama Zoran has worked in the early childhood field in different areas for the last 20 years, including directing intervention programs for parents and children ages birth to 4 years. She worked with the founders of the early childhood department in the Ministry of Education and has supervised educational settings all over Israel. Ms. Zoran was also a part of the writing team for the national curriculum for 2- and 3-year-olds. She brought the Reggio Emilia approach to Israel. Ms. Zoran also established an early childhood program in the Department of Education at Tel-Hai College.

Select Bibliography of Works by Lilian G. Katz

Abstract

Lilian G. Katz has written numerous articles, books, chapters, and conference papers on topics related to early childhood education and child development. This bibliography lists the works published or presented between 1966 and 2000.

Among her many contributions to the field, Lilian Katz has written extensively about early childhood education and child development. Her scholarly interests include teacher education, dispositions, the differences between self-esteem and narcissism, mixed-age grouping, and the Project Approach. The following list contains most, but not all, of her publications and presentations from 1966 to 2000. Lilian Katz continues to work and publish in these areas.

Doctoral Dissertation

1968. *A Study of Changes in Behavior of Children Enrolled in Two Types of Head Start Classes.* Stanford University.

Journal Articles

1966. (with P. S. Sears & L. Soderstrum). Psychological development of children participating in a vertically accelerated mathematics program. *Psychology in the Schools, 3*(4), 307-318.

1968. (with D. Peters & N. Stein). Observing behavior in kindergarten and preschool classes. *Childhood Education, 44*(6), 400-405.

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1971. Sentimentality in preschool teachers: Some possible interpretations. *Peabody Journal of Education, 48*(2), 96-105. EJ031704.

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1972. The developmental stages of preschool teachers. *Elementary School Journal, 73*(1), 50-54. EJ064759.

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1973. Helping local Head Start staff and parents plan their own program: The enabler model. *Children Today, 1*(6), 20-23. EJ070789.

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1977. Challenges to early childhood educators. *Young Children, 32*(4), 4-11. EJ159259.

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1977. What is basic for young children? *Childhood Education, 54*(1), 16-19. EJ170331.

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1979. Notes on sibling rivalry. *Review,* 40-43 (Cleveland Association for the Education of Young Children).

1979. The educator's role in socialization. *Journal of Research and Development in Education, 13*(1), 100-104 EJ213717.

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1981. A matrix for research on teacher education. *South Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 9*(1), 19-30. EJ258770.

1981. Brotherhood/sisterhood begins at home: Notes on sibling rivalry. *Journal of the Canadian Association of Young Children, 7*(1), 19-30.

1981. (with J. D. Raths et al.). Follow-up studies: Are they worth the trouble? *Journal of Teacher Education, 32*(2), 18-24. EJ247910.

1981/1982. Advice for inservice education on helping teachers. *Educational Perspectives, 20,* 16-21, and *Education Digest,* February 1982.

1982. (with J. D. Raths). The best of intentions for the education of teachers. *Action in Teacher Education, 4*(1), 8-16. EJ269118. Also published in *Journal of Education for Teaching, 8*(3), 275-283. EJ273553.

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1985. (with J. D. Raths). Dispositions as goals for teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 1*(4). 301-307.

1985. Research currents: Teachers as learners. *Language Arts, 62*(7), 778-782. EJ326527.

1985. (with J. D. Raths). A framework for research on teacher education programs. *Journal of Teacher Education, 36*(6), 9-15. EJ327383.

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1987. Lilian Katz: Let's not underestimate young children's intellects. *Instructor, 97*(3), 16, 19. EJ362943.

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